GREEK AND
LATIN
ANTHOLOGY

GREEK AND LATIN ANTHOLOGY

Part I. GREEK MASTERPIECES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SIR WALTER RALEGH: A BIOGRAPHY

FIVE CENTURIES OF ENGLISH VERSE: IMPRESSIONS

TRUTHS OR TRUISMS

GREEK AND LATIN ANTHOLOGY *thought* INTO ENGLISH VERSE

By WILLIAM STEBBING, M.A.
HON. FELLOW WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

PART I

GREEK MASTERPIECES

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TO

MY WIFE

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FOREWORD

My enterprise, I am aware, is bold and needs an explanation. Greek and Latin Masterpieces "long since" were invited, or condemned, to be educational by their actual refinement, and, as it were, scientific precision, both in verse and prose. As creation of thought, especially in verse, they became in schools its ordinary verbal instruments. A large proportion of educational minds, even of fine quality, using them, have commonly failed to direct attention to the spirit, to pay homage to it. Education of the labouring classes, though happily not in Scotland, stopped short of Classics. In English education for the higher ranks, formerly it was unusual to hear a Tutor, even in colleges, a Lecturer, emphasize the grandeur of Æschylus, elegance of Catullus or Virgil. I will hope that in these later days amendment has been made.

While the literary beauty of Greek and Latin authors, particularly in verse, has been much neglected in education, no such complaint applies to the language of books. Every important ancient writer has attracted a legion of writers to translate and comment, with several remarkable exceptions. Not a few have enlisted the genius of illustrious English poets as translators. Some courage was needed to render anew into English verse choice

examples of bygone Classic inspiration; to wreathe a single twentieth-century garland from some four and twenty gardens of Ancient Greek and Roman poesy.

I have devoted ten full years to my happy task. During a June week-end visit to my dear friend, F. St. John Thackeray, at his charming Mapledurham Parsonage, I challenged him to translate Virgil's lines, 1 Æn. vv. 459–63. On my return home, I put my version into the form to be found under the title "Wings" Part II. The attempt suggested to me a much more ambitious work, the present, which I hope to complete. My delightful companion survived too brief a time to know the progress of my plan. Later on I had the happiness to enjoy the sympathy and counsels—it is, I believe, I may boast, the commendation—of the fine scholar and wise thinker, Lord Bryce. Few could feel more the immense loss through his death than I.

Let me add that some translations in the present volumes have already appeared in publications by the firms of Messrs. Longman, and Messrs. Fisher Unwin, and re-appear now with their goodwill.

HOMER

HOMER

c. 962 B.C.

THE boldest of all attempts at translation in any of its many forms is to subject the Iliad to the process. On the other hand, it is one of the most natural. None surpasses the old Epic in interest and beauty; and therefore it is a real privation that it should be closed to popular British intelligence. But the language in which it is written forbids, for many, direct study. To suppose that everybody, to be free of its contents, should learn Greek for the purpose, is useless. An infinitesimal proportion of any nation has the opportunity to gain even a smattering of a dead language. If it had, the result is of no practical importance, not to say enjoyment. More or less literal versions by good and sympathetic scholars help, though they tantalize. They continually remind of the claim of foreign verse to be rendered into the reader's tongue versified. The feeling on this side has been met, as might be expected, by a corresponding agreement on the part of writers. Verse translations have been abundant, and after a large variety of styles. May I, while recognizing merit in most, be allowed to say that the success is still too partial to preclude fresh attempts?

The only criticism which I do not so much fear as anticipate and accept, is that I have not expressed the full inspiration of my Author. I know that I have not, though it has not been for want of endeavour. For a mind of one age, religion, and race to reflect a thought born and developed in another is hard always. I, in particular, am content if I have given the impression of a fair creation, although often expanded.

This last, as an adverse criticism, I can accept without self-reproach. My metrical versions occupy more space than the originals. Obviously; otherwise, it had been vain to make the attempt. Greek and Latin in the first place are more completely developed from within than English. The interdependent economy of nerves, ligaments,—entire structure—is in advance of our own language. Room is saved everywhere, even in such common appendages as articles, cases, persons, often prepositions. When the translation is of thought,—of any period—in feeling, fashions, manners, learning, morals, religion—the demand for latitude in space is irresistible. Were my offence against a Classic no worse than dilution or dilatation, I could bear the charge lightly. I testify against myself to manifold worse sins, confusion of a Master's ethereal upstrokes and downstrokes. My conscience will be abundantly satisfied if withal I have helped a few to understand, as by an echo, something of the magic of Greek and Latin minstrelsy.

I have endeavoured to think the Poet's thought. I have not grudged space to reproduce Helen's review from Troy's Wall, for the King, of the array of Greek Princes. Still more fully I have let my readers hear how Hector and Andromache finally parted with the sweetest adieu bid by any wife and husband; how

Patroclus, after a life waiting on another's moods, crowded into one day's chapter a whole independent career of triumph and tragedy; how Achilles in vengeance for the Shadow bestrides an entire battlefield; finally, how old Priam royally shames all the victor's triumph by the grandeur of his pilgrimage to beg the body of a dead son.

Horace has said that even Homer "sometimes nods." Never, as the national Poet, in spirit. Greeks were educated to feel and find at each name, in every line, significance. For us, as for Horace, some remind of nothing. As for them, still for us, the Iliad was, and is, a great portrait gallery, a vast study in psychology. It is a miracle for the subtle discrimination in individual character. As the action proceeds, depth and colour grow. For minor figures, an epithet suffices. With principals, according to their degree, fresh traits perpetually become visible; emphasized, not transformed. The list is long. Gradually thus we see Achilles, Agamemnon, Ulysses, Ajax, Hector, Priam, Paris, Helen, Andromache, Hecuba, Cassandra; yes, even Gods and Goddesses, Zeus, Pallas, Hera, Thetis, Apollo, Aphrodité, Ares. Regard them as they re-appear in later verse, theology, mythology. Homer's credit for introspection will not suffer. During the necessary halts in the working-out of the heroic story, in the scene-shifting, there will be a sudden flash of sunlight, illuminating warrior and period. Achilles plays on his harp, as envoys bring offers of a reconciliation he will fiercely reject. Agamemnon arms, at Diomede's suggestion, and bears himself as "The King" should in the fight. Diomede and Glaucus lower their combative spears rather than violate the gracious sanctity of hereditary hospitality. Patroclus

leaves his lord untold that the Trojans are at the Fleet rather than not bind up a friend's wound.

I shall be on my defence for discarding plain English prose in favour of ruder verse. Again, I have to excuse exchanges to and fro of ten syllables and fourteen syllables. Hexameters are the earliest Greek metre of which we know. They are coeval with the language in any shape transmitted to us, and helped to form it. The Iliad itself for all rhythmical uses needed nothing more harmoniously elastic. Equally for scholars now it interprets ordinary narrative, argument, the subtle drawing of character, the fury of passion, which share among them the Iliad. For the rush, the roar, of the War, the tussle of chiefs in their death throes, a stronger more capacious, weightier setting is more suitable, more convenient. It must be some fifty to sixty years since I read a line of old Chapman; but the fact of his use of the metre for a version of the Iliad has been hallowed to us by Keats's sonnet. So, without exploring the translation, I have availed myself of the metre in rendering the wonderful war passages in the later Books. Though Chapman's thundering fourteen syllabics are too often in themselves inclined, as may be mine, to the heavy roll of a Flemish mare, they have one considerable advantage. The four additional syllables afford elbow-room to the versifier. Our English ten syllabics are, as were Greek hexameters, an excellent medium for general themes. Also they can, as inspired writers have proved, mellow and soften for the tenderest pathos. Let me be pardoned, therefore, for daring to employ both, each in due turn.

Matthew Arnold in his elaborate Oxford lectures on translations of the Iliad, summed up as Homer's character-

istics "rapidity of movement, plainness of words and style, simplicity and directness of ideas, and, above all, nobleness, the grand manner." To my purpose it is more pertinent to consider the effect of qualities than their individual nature and conditions. I desire to show how Homer saw events and men, humanity, the human world, Nature; how, through him, we see him, them. It is not necessary to be a scholar, a student, to feel with amazement the pictorial distinctness with which he has brought, and brings, every deed, every feature of his tale and its heroes before living minds in successive ages. His readers see each action, follow the beat of each emotion. They are present; almost doers, sufferers. I have striven to trace and present the Poet's intention. In some degree I have, I hope, realized it to myself. Alas! the more conscious I become of shortcomings in the endeavour to communicate my impression of grandeur to others.

THE ILIAD

Discontent long smouldering between the General, King Agamemnon, and Prince Achilles, bursts into a flame through the King's repulse of a prayer by Apollo's Priest, Chryses, for the restoration of his captive daughter, who has been awarded to Agamemnon as share in the booty of a stormed city. Another prisoner, Briseis, fell to Achilles. The God avenged his Priest by a pestilence, which forced the King to compliance, coupled with a seizure of Briseis. Achilles yields, but resigns all share in the war with Troy.

An attempt was made to end the war by a duel between Paris and Menelaus, in the sight of Priam and Troy's Councillors. Helen previously points out to Priam the Achæan Captains. Menelaus is victor, but Troy will not yield. Andromache and Hector foresee Troy's capture, and bid farewell. The war proceeds with varying fortunes, especially against Greece. Zeus mainly favours Troy ; even permitting a barrier erected by the Greeks between Troy and the Fleet to be victoriously assaulted. Hector threatens the Fleet with flames, notwithstanding the defence by Ajax with his twenty-two cubits pike.

Agamemnon soon saw the blunder he had made. He armed himself magnificently ; goes into battle, and achieves valiant successes, but is wounded and has to retire. An assemblage of the Chiefs decides upon an expression of a desire for friendship with Achilles. The mission meets with a complete negation. It finds Achilles playing to Patroclus on the lyre.

PROLOGUE—WRATH

Agamemnon—Achilles

For nine long years had Greece besieged Troy Town;
And still it seemed to keep its old renown.
Why should it, populous and walled, have cause for fear
Of a host armed but with bow, sword, and spear
Against walls Gods had built to mock the might
Of such force to Time's end by sheer breadth and height?
Only on the front could a siege be pressed:
Egress, ingress were free throughout the rest.
Troy yet could draw from Asian States behind
Food and wares, and war furniture in kind—
Yes, even men at arms, with whom it would
Sally forth, and shed Greek and foreign blood.
But a change there was; Troy that once had been
Lycia's, Phrygia's suzerain Queen,
Had to buy help more dearly than before,
For those had the same foes at their own door.
Agamemnon was, as Mycenæ's King,
More than choice of forces that Greece could bring.
Many Captains, feudatories of lands,
Held of him, were subject to his commands.
Some had been Helen's suitors—But One came
Constrained by no bond but pure thirst for fame.
Son of old Peleus, King in Thessaly,

And of Thetis, great Goddess of the Sea.
To the Atreidæ he had sworn no oath;
He partook no quarrels of one or both.
Two forces had ruled him since he drew breath,
Care for war more than life, honour than death.
Soon he tired of spying from day to day
For some postern by which to pierce his way;
Of beating Ida's slopes, forest glades, and rocks,
To snare some Royal shepherd with his flocks;
Of repulsing chance raids, disgust, or pride,
When townsmen were ripe for a dash outside.
His choice was, to vary a dull blockade,
Storm of wealthy forts by escalade.
Whatever the project, if doubt who led
No Prince but he was chosen for the head.
Atreides was "the King"; he stamped the whole;
But Achilles Peleides was the Soul.
Little wonder if the Senior tired
Of the renown for deeds that youth "inspired,"
Suspected designs oft in the Goddess-born
To treat even a Pelopid with scorn.
Peleides on his own part chafed to yield
Deference to one seldom in the Field,
And tainted with vice, the young think none worse,
Fondness to clutch and hoard pelf in a purse.

Now, Though deemed "impregnable," the Hero won
The holy City of Eëtion.
Large spoil—the town was richest in the land—
Many captives; not men—they died, sword in hand—
But women, from far and near; for the tale
Of strength brought high, and fair, within the pale.
Achilles let others divide and share.
Chryseis and Briseis, each of rare

Charm, were assigned by lot—to the King One;
One His by whom the feat of arms was done.
Chryseis, daughter of Apollo's Priest
At Chrysa, had been Eëtion's guest.
The Old Man, as to save his Child from death,
Hurried—with his Shrine's treasure, the God's Wreath,
On the gold Sceptre—to redeem the Maid.
Both Atreidæ, the whole Greek host, he prayed,
To think of their far homes, of his forlorn.
The rest pitied; Agamemnon in scorn
Threatened: "Beware, Greybeard, of coming here!
If again I find thee loitering near
With thy peevish complaints, the present grief
May breed fresh, thy own, needing more relief.
Sceptre and wreaths will then avail thee not!
The girl in my Greek home shall share my lot."
Wounded in pride and heart, angry and sore,
The Old Man knelt on the billowy shore,
Offering to his God one only vow:
"Repay my tears, Apollo, with thy bow!"
Phœbus heard. As he hastened down the path
From the peaks of Olympus in a storm of wrath,
The shafts in his quiver clashed—for the God
Like Night rushed—at every step he trod;
Nearing the Fleet, fitting arrow, he shot.
Straight, mules and swift dogs sickened on the spot;
A second; men. The air smoked, flamed, with fires
Rising, sinking—innumerable pyres.
Kalchas, at a Council on the tenth day
Called by Achilles to seek how to stay
The plague, and pledged help should he displease
"Great Ones," traced back the source of the disease
To Apollo's wrath for his Priest. A gust

Of envy, jealousy, pride, greed, and lust
Swept the "King" away: "Kalchas! scheming foe,
Prophet never of good to me, but woe!
And whence, tell me, if I shall now resign
A prize to cure the plague, is to come mine?"
"From Troy," Achilles answered: "meantime wait."
"Nay; but now? So, as stirred somehow, debate
Throws the task on me as 'King' to allay
The God's anger, roused in whatever way,
I restore the Maid; and thou may'st surmise
At leisure, how I shall replace my Prize!"
"Menaces!" cried Achilles: "I no more
Fight for you, Atreidæ—wage your own war!"
"Stay, or Go!" the answer: "for thee to choose.
If away, not I will it be who lose.
Of all our Princes here, thou with thy curst
Temper art the one that I like the worst.
But a last visit I shall pay to show,
Which, Thou or I, is stronger of the two."
Achilles was in two moods; to snatch out
His sword, the Princes gone; or—this his doubt—
Let time avenge him. His heart ached between;
When down came Athena, sent by the Queen.
Standing behind him, seen by none else there,
She caught hold of him by the golden hair;
Promised amends; but, "let him rage in word
To its utmost fury; be speech his sword."
Obeying, he thrust back the blade; then flung
All epithets left in him, with free tongue:
"Wine-bibber, money-grubber, with one eye
On look-out for offal, stag's heart to flee,
Spoil-sneaker, when more valiant men have bled,
Master who grinds his People's bones for bread!

Thou canst seize my Prize. What an Army gave
Its Chief may resume. But pray me to save
When Hector drives and slays? This rod, I swear,
Shall sooner again rind and green leaves bear
Than in thy distress will I bring relief
To thy Achæans in their day of grief!"

Chryseis was restored, and her old sire
Prevailed on Phœbus to forgo his ire.
But to knowledge of the Greek camp repent
Threats! 'twould shame its General; so, he sent
For Briseis!—an outrage working worse
Ill to all than the plague from the Priest's curse.
"Unwilling she"; mute, her lord saw her part,
Afraid a farewell would lay bare a heart.
Yet she had her share when "in tears" he sat
On the beach, not alone, but desolate.
For his Mother, Thetis, hearing him weep,
Had risen, a mist, from the hoary deep
To comfort in his wrongs, and had assured
Him vengeance for all that he had endured:
"Wait, and Zeus would lay on the Greeks the cost
Of their choice of Captain to lead their host.
That Sovereign himself should be taught to pay
Respect to the bravest in his array."

HELEN ON THE WALLS

An armistice was proclaimed; Troy and Greece
Chose Elders to formulate terms of peace.
Busy Rumour ran through the Field, the Town;
Priam from Iliam's ramparts looked down.
Helen, at home, alone ignorant, sate,
'Mid whispering maidens, musing on fate.
To her Iris, from Hera, Heaven's Queen,
As Laodice, to lead her to the scene:
"Haste, sweet one, doings wonderful to see,
Preparing by Greeks and Trojans, for thee;
Both Armies, with their shields and spears, are there;
But not, as their wont is, to pierce hearts here.
At present, while their chosen Chiefs define
Rules of combat, the rank and file recline,
Quick, come! Is not the question in all eyes—
Menelaus fights Paris!—where the Prize!
Yearning for husband, home and parents, stole,
Sweet regret, sent from Hera, on her soul;
A few soft tears; then, all in white arrayed,
On either side attended by a maid—
Æthra, Klymena—she left bow'r and hall;
And from the gates ascended to the wall.
In the gateway tower King Priam sate,
With Elders, courtiers, pillars of the State,
Iketaon, son of Ares, Panthous,

Lampus, and Thymætus, and Klytius.
And he had summoned too, Ukalegon,
And wise Antenor, Æsyetes' son—
Though age forbade the Field, in speech both good—
As cicalas shrill bravely in a wood—
When Helen came:

"No wonder that such charm
As this," they whispered, "has wrought deadly harm
To Trojans and Argives! How to resist?
Could Beauty more dazzling in Heav'n exist!
But at what cost! Return her whence she came;
Or keep to be Ilium's curse and shame!"

More graciously the King: Let her be sure
We deem her guiltless; if Troy must endure,
Blame the Gods; as for tears, They made them flow:
"Sit, dear Child; and name those you see below;
First, who that Captain—stateliest in mien?
Though others may be taller, none have I seen
So majestic, not one like to him made
Lordly—nay, kingly—used to be obeyed!"

She passed, to please him, the Chiefs in review.
"The King's instinct for Kings," she said, "is true;
'Tis Agamemnon's self, swordsman as tried
In fight as is the realm he governs wide.
My brother once: and he proud of the claim;
Can I and that woman be still the same!"
"Atreides, right blest," Priam cried, "by Fate,
With this host to pay homage to thy State!
I remember long since chanced I to behold,
In Phrygia, famed for vineyards and gold,
How Otres and Mygdon arrayed their ranks
Of horsemen upon Sangarius' banks.
The ardour of youth drove me to engage

In a war they massed their whole strength to wage
With the Amazons. Theirs could not compare
With these legions; yet myriads they were!"
"But he, who if not as Atreides tall,
Stands, for shoulders, and deep chest, first of all?
Though 'tis truce, and his arms lie on the ground,
He is never off guard; ranges around
His men's lines—masterful, as when one views
A ram ordering flock of white-fleeced ewes."
"'Tis Odysseus," said she; "of a rough isle;
Country-bred, but versed in many a wile,
All sorts of entangling counsels; not one
Greek is a match for Laertes' wise son!"
Old Antenor capped her praise with his own:
"Yea, Lady; I too have Odysseus known.
Menelaus and he, when they arrived
To discuss matters concerning Thee, lived
Under my roof; as host and friend, I sought
To test and discern how each felt and thought.
Menelaus was tall; standing, he rose
Above the crowd; the other, in repose,
Sat higher; so in speech: clear as a bird
The Spartan; though not full, missing no word;
By that he had, that lacked he, it was plain
That he must be the younger of the twain.
Nought Odysseus possessed of grace, or ease;
Practised no arts to captivate or please;
Bolt upright he stood; eyes fixed on the ground,
But with an underlook, spying around;
Sceptre in both hands, fast-clutched, stiff and straight,
Not used to emphasize, extenuate;
Wooden figure, unpolished, shy, and dour,
As if resenting his dull wits; a boor!

Then, hark to the great voice out of vast breast;
Words, floating snowflakes, one by one, to rest!
We minded no longer postures, or air;
Lord of debate; speaker beyond compare!"
As still the King gazed, one came from among
His fellow princes, o'erlooking the throng
By head and broad shoulders; 'twas a delight
To veteran Priam, so brave a sight.
"His name?" "Big Ajax," the reply: "a foe
Must raze that bulwark ere Greece suffer woe.
Note too, where Idomeneus beside him stands—
As with Cretan neighbours, giving commands—
Revered like a God; his wont was to come,
And be entertained by us at our home
In Lacedæmon; with more that I see,
And could, if time there were, name, King, to thee."
But as those starry eyes marked Chief by Chief,
Each form recognized started a fresh grief.
She felt wherever her life took its way,
Her beauty shed poison by night and day.
A Pest she, a Fury:
"Loved Sire and Lord,
Thy goodness crushes me; each tender word!
Ah! that I did not woo Death to my arms
Rather than follow thy son's fatal charms;
Forsaking kinsmen, and my bridal bed,
The sweet girl-friends amid whom I was bred,
And Her, sole daughter mine!
Had life but run
As in fair Lacedæmon 'twas begun!
Ev'n now know not I too well why in vain
I search all Argive groups upon the plain

For my twin-brothers ?—
If they never sailed
From Aulis, or, coming hither, have failed
To-day's conclave—the Cause I !—
How proclaim
Themselves of my blood ! Me their Sister ! Me their Shame ! "

Wouldst happier have been, Lady, hadst known
They lived not on strange soil, or on their own ?

Hector; Andromache

Hearing that his wife sought him, Hector went
Towards the wall, awaiting her descent.
She, a life parted between hope, and dread,
To hail him victor, or to mourn him dead,
Now, breathless, running a course against Fate,
Beheld him standing by the Skæan Gate.
A desperate hazard hers—woman's charms
Against a devilry of blood and arms!
Yet the prize! three lives, if love's fine art
Could from a furnace snatch a soldier's heart!
True, not on form alone, and soul as high,
Did the brave lady in her need rely:
To fortify each sorrowful appeal,
Each source of mutual kindness unseal,
A maiden of her household held the boy,
Whom, a radiant star, the hope of Troy,
Hector had at birth Skamandrios named,
But the city with one accord acclaimed
"Astyanax," his heir, whom it adored,
Ilium's counsellor, its shield and sword.
Hector, guessing at the fond mission, smiled,
Silent, as they approached, upon his Child.
Then She, as tears ran down each lovely cheek,
With, in both hands, her courage, dared to speak:
"Forgive," she cried, "my Own, when now I stay
Thee battle-bound; 'tis for my life I pray,

And for this innocent's; all life can give
Depends for us whether Thou choose to live.
No common chance of war threatens Thee now;
Challenged to the field, full too well I know
Thy hot blood recks little that man to man
Greeks dare not meet my Hector; no, they plan
To swarm about Thee single—like a pack
Of wolves on a boar, to hustle and hack!
If for Thyself Thou wilt not, canst not, care,
Look on Us twain and pity my despair.
The joy and frenzy of the fight for Thee;
An orphan's lot Thy Babe's, and worse for me!
Thy feet run straight tow'rds death; and Oh! that mine,
Ere Thou hast touched the goal, might outpace Thine!
Rememberest Thou Her whom on the side
Of Platos once Thou wooedst for Thy Bride?
A maid within a ninefold fence of love—
Mother and Sire revered as Gods above,
And Brethren in their citadel of stone
Impregnable by warrior, save One—
And the One came, by his birth half Divine,
His breath Death's blast on Eëtion's line.
Cilician Thebes, despite gates and walls,
He stormed, and left a waste—temples and halls—
On the same day my seven brothers slew,
And firing their palace insolently threw
Their bodies in the flames, to swell a heap
Of butchered oxen, and of white-fleeced sheep.
Eëtion full of years, brave, and good,
He would not mingle with the common crowd,
Such as he, though carnage-drunk, know sacred things;

A King's son honours blood of reigning Kings.
Clad in his dazzling armour died my Sire,
And round him thus arrayed flamed high his pyre.
Armed lie his ashes, their own monument;
And Nymphs of the hills, chanting their lament,
Have wreathed the spot with elms; their ev'ry leaf,
Swaying in the breeze, voices the land's grief.
My Mother, Queen, enslaved, her captor brought
To the Greek camp; and thence her Father bought
Her from bonds at once and life; for a dart
From Dian's bow heals ev'n a broken heart.
My family destroyed by fire and sword—
How can I bear the ruin to record!
'Tis that a present happiness had cast
A kindly shadow o'er a cruel past.
The ache was charmed from rankling memories
By traversing an atmosphere of bliss.
Till now, poor orphan, and fond fool, I thought
She who has Hector can have missed of nought:
Alas for Me! that Thou; my One and All,
Leav'st me desolate at a bugle's call!
Nay, bethink Thee, Ilium's Warder; whose
But Thine the How and Where the fight to choose?
Are there not legends, prophecies, that tell
Our walls, though Gods', are not impregnable?
The wild fig tree? Is not Troy bid beware
Of the spot it springs from—a weak point there?
Already Achæans spy out a fault,
And weigh the chances of a prompt assault.
Is not the tower spot to watch and man,
Defy the foe to enter if he can?"
"Thou wouldst not have thy Hector, sweet my Wife,
Value his fame so low, so high his life,

As to refuse a challenge to the fight
From all Achæa in its utmost might!
Is it for Ilium's champion to call
On towers to screen, skulk behind a wall?
How could I face my warriors' surprise,
Or meet the doubt within a woman's eyes?
Impossible spirit like mine to tame,
Bid it buy length of days at cost of shame!
Long since I learnt, and never will unlearn,
To be worthy through and through, never turn;
Ever, when fight Troy must, to fight in front.
In this mould Nature cast me; thus I count
To earn my sire renown; and, by the way,
Store some for myself—while it yet is Day!
For well I know our doom; foresee the whole
Down to the inmost fibre of my soul;
How God-built Ilium, with King and host,
Must flit away, shadowy as a ghost.
Deem not, my Wife, I lightly rate thy woes
When Troy shall sink as swiftly as it rose,
Rather 'tis I forgiveness need, I know,
By him to whom we faith and homage owe,
Priam, and by Hecuba, Mother dear,
Her whom beyond all mortals I revere,
And by a band of brothers true and brave,
Whom—and how gladly—I would die to save!
My heart should ache at thought of kindred blood
Running down Ilium's pavement, a flood,
Dragged by the hair high ladies in the street,
Dead princes spurned by vile Achæan feet—
But 'tis with grief as joy; in dire distress
Great agony will swallow up the less;
I have no heart for grief but Thine alone,

When Ilium has fallen, and I gone.
A vision haunts me day and night—I see
Thee led a slave and weeping bitterly;
Thy heart will groan, as mine for Thee—no cure—
What must be must be; learn then to endure.
Nought boots it to protest against thy doom,
Whether it be to ply a stranger's loom,
Or, as Thou drawest from an Argive well,
When women view thy tears, to hear one tell:
'Lo! Hector's wife!' and deeper sobs will tear
Thy breast to feel afresh I am not there;
For earth must lie on me heavy and deep,
Ere hand be laid on Thee to make Thee weep!"

Then, arms stretched forth, the Father turned his face,
For his Child to spring to the dear embrace.
Back from the menace of the waving crest
Shuddered the Babe upon his Nurse's breast!
The Parents laughed; and Hector straight unlaced
The martial terror from his brow, and placed
It, empty, gleaming in the sunshine; then
With many a kiss and caress, again
Sued for an infant's ecstasy of love—
Less vainly than alas! to Heav'n above
To father his orphan:
"O Gods, endow
This babe with any powers I owned below;
On his behalf be guardians of the Crown
I should have worn, and grant him my renown—
Only, doubled; so that the words shall run—
'Glorious Father, more glorious Son!'
And let this be for him the crowning joy
In every triumph he wins for Troy,

To assure his Mother he counts her pride
In Hector's son worth a world's praise beside!"
Hearing the pray'r, the Mother wept and smiled,
As to her breast, a rose, she took their child.
He read her tears, and answer to them made:
"Partner of my soul! be not thou afraid!
No more than cowardice can add a day,
Will hardihood snatch one of mine away.
Nor Good nor Ill has ever changed a span
Of men's existence since the world began.
The Fates determine Life and Death, and mete
The labour for which each that breathes is fit.
Us men the ruder tasks of earth become;
'Tis Thine, my Queen, to stay and rule at home;
War ours—ours of Ilium most of all;
Dearest, rejoice that I obey the call!"
Donning his crested helmet, forth he bent
His steps to the battlefield; home she went,
With many backward looks, shedding big tears.
Arrived, she told, the parting, and her fears,
Thereon throughout the palace swept a tide
Of wailing, as for a Lord who had died.

Fight Resumed

Agamemnon sends envoys to beg in vain a reconciliation of Achilles :

They found Achilles in his spacious tent
Drawing forth clear-sweet music, as he bent,
From a lyre, with cross-bar of silver, wrought
Exquisitely, that from the spoils he brought
Of Eëtion's home. As the strings rang,
His throat answered to the notes ; and he sang
Of Heroes' glories in an elder age,
Rapt, and forgetful even of his rage.

Agamemnon's petition having been refused, Greece and Troy fought with alternate success. Zeus interposed according to his agreement with Thetis ; and Hector even threatens to burn the Fleet. Ajax all but slays him by a huge stone ; but Apollo cures him. The Fleet is in peril :

For the long protracted struggle upon the Trojan shore
Whether the Greek Fleet were to be condemned to sail
no more,
Was only a duel between a champion on the spot,
And one, who, although waiting the issue hard-by, was not.
Indulgent to Thetis, Zeus had engaged that Troy should win
On a bloody battlefield, that even fire should begin
To catch the Fleet, till redress for her Son's wrongs had
been paid,
And the Argives confessed their host were lost without
his aid.

Zeus too, knew Hector destined to be short-lived; he should have
Brave and glorious days, if few, before he reached his grave.
Thus, from either side—for Achilles, or for Hector—Zeus,
Equally biassed, had sufficient reason or excuse
To continue Troy's turn of victory. However fierce
Stand of a phalanx, elsewhere lines were easier to pierce.
Avoiding serried tiers, a locked square of brass, Hector fell
On the ill-armed masses by the shore; scattered them pell-mell.
No choice longer had the Invincibles but to retreat;
The whole Greek Army, forced now as it was, faced now the Fleet.

Ebb or flow, a tide may be made to appear to forget
Through a sudden gust of wind, or landwards, or seawards set,
Its due direction for an instant's waywardness; but soon
It resumes the prescriptive movement ordered by the moon.
Some Hero might have inspired the Hellenic rank and file
To stand and beat the Trojans and their Allies back awhile;
Then Zeus would look from Ida down, and Fortune once more turn,
As if pledging herself to Hector that the Ships should burn.
Already on foot the Trojans had passed beyond the fosse,
Warned by Polydamas, the Cars did not attempt to cross,
Fearing sharp stakes beneath; but the Army of all grades made
A long assault on the rampart by way of escalade.
Sarpedon was the first to obtain foothold on the wall,
He caught at a feeble buttress, and shook it to a fall.

Other agile climbers followed. On it a confused crowd,
Achæans, Trojans, jostling one another, mixed their blood.
Hector finally, impatient, heaved up a stone of weight
Beyond present Men's strength, had not Zeus chos'n to
turn it light—
One of a number lying about, a large scattered store
To prop the Greek ships drawn up by the Army from
the shore.
He cast it at the locked gate; the sudden, tremendous
stroke
Nought of human workmanship could stand; bars and
hinges broke.
Everywhere, he seemed impossible to bar, like Night.
The defenders he drove towards the Fleet in headlong
flight.
None living but Beings Divine could then have blocked
his path,
His eyes blazed; they burned like fire; he was a Spirit
of Wrath!

For Hector was inspired by Zeus to attack and destroy both the Barrier between Troy and Fleet, and the Fleet itself. Apollo at times would shake His Ægis.

So long as he held it rigid, brandished not forth its
force,
Men fought, died: fortune kept an even, homicidal
course.
But when, looking Greeks full in the faces, he tossed
The weird fringe, each tassel as alive, at the close-
massed host,
And flung over the battlefield his paralyzing shout,
All manliness forsook the Greeks; retreat became a rout;

The staked trench, screaming, groaning shambles. Hector forbade
As a mortal crime halting anywhere to spoil the dead.
Never varied his one cry: "Onward, onward to the Fleet!"
Bright Apollo would then back him, contemptuously with his feet
Stamping the dyke's banks to a causeway, levelling the wall
Easily as a boy, having built sand forts, upsets all;
Until, like a resistless wave rolled by wild winds aboard
A helpless barque, trampling trench and wall, the Phœbus-fired horde
Burst on the Fleet. Reaching upwards at the decks from the Cars
Troy's spears struck at the crews; these replied with rough iron bars!
The Achæan phalanx upon firm ground had for a space
Held its own. Now and again, swiftest-footed in a race,
Would spring, never despairing that the worst day might be won,
Antilochus, having killed, one blow, Hiketaon's son;
Now Menelaus would slay a grandchild of Priam; now—
One or other Trojan met an arrow from Teucer's bow,
Unfailing, till, when Hector was the mark, Zeus snapped the string—
Needing him—and dismissed the wasted arrow fluttering.
'Twas Hector's hour; he was at the ships; caught hold by the stern
Of the gallant ship that had brought, alas! with no return
To his Phylaké, Protesilaus, self-doomed, foremost

To die on this shore, one for myriads in the Greek host.
" Bring fire ! " Hector cried to his men, grasping the taffrail fast :
" Praise to mighty Zeus for a day repaying all the past !
If then He blinded the Elders who senselessly forbade
Armed resistance against the wretches daring to invade
Our land, now He atones, deigns Himself to lead and inspire !
But the torches ! where are the torches ? the fire ! haste ! the fire ! "
And the riot of battle ! With spears, swords, the ground was spread ;
Nor these alone tumbled off from shoulders, hands, of the dead.
Many living—Greeks and Trojans—discarded them to use
Pole-axes, clubs, they snatched up, that would mangle, maul, and bruise.
No feathered arrows there, no far-reaching javelins flew ;
A crazy desire worked in the mixed mass to hack and hew.
For fancy measuring distant effects would poorly serve
Appetite for palpable butchery in feel and nerve.
More unutterably savage raged the fight on ; and still
More and more waned for Greek combatants' hope to last through, not will.
Ajax himself, disdaining shelter in an armoured crowd,
Had fought, as he stalked from deck to deck, shouting long and loud.
To and fro he kept tossing from hand to hand, big and strong,
In contempt of Trojans, a pike twenty-two cubits long.
When at length perforce he gave way so far—sore sting to pride—

'Twas to exchange his deck-tour for a tiller, there to bide,
Keeping death, moments he knew, how many knew not, at bay.
Sulky wild boar he stood to the end of all things, to stay
Fire from the ships. Hark to him shouting: "Conquer, Greeks, and live,
If ye care for life; there is no second alternative!"
A ring on the dinted shield! Paused for reply—lo! one more
Crumpled Trojan agonizing upon the bloody shore!
In vain, the Hero, with a mighty stone heavy as lead,
Prostrated Fire-King Hector, motionless, and all but dead.
'Twas resurrection, or as for huntsmen to have chased
Game to wood and rocks, and lo! a lion guarding the waste!
Apollo had intervened; Greeks knew not, but that the day
Was not yesterday; and the Chiefs sent rank and file away,
For garrison of the Ships. They fought Hector against odds;
And now, lent by Achilles' self to meet foes led by Gods,
Patroclus in his friend's arms, to save the ships, against a first
Trophy in the battlefield to nourish his martial thirst;
For the Lycian King, Sarpedon, son of Zeus, was great
In Ilium, where he kept a royal state.
Not demeaning himself to fight a warrior unknown,
He leaped from his Chariot, and Patroclus left his own.
'Twas as when two screaming vultures, crook-taloned, and hooked beak,

Quarrel over their carrion upon some lofty peak.
The Lycian King's spear cost the horse Pedasus his life,
Sacrificed by mischance, poor thing, to homicidal strife;
Without gain to Sarpedon, for Patroclus pierced his breast.
Dying, he adjured his friend Glaucus he "would never rest
Did Glaucus suffer Greeks to strip his armour, and disgrace
His body; bring to shame his faithful comrade and his race!"

Glaucus, with arm crippled by a shaft, prays Phœbus:

"Though son of Zeus, Sarpedon, is dead.
Now, grant that I may urge our soldiers on
To rescue the Dead from insult, and with an arm restored
Accomplish the prayer he uttered with his dying word!"
Wonder! The agony ceased; the wound was cured; and, right hand
Grasping spear, Glaucus gathered around him a valiant band
Lycians, to guard the body from wrongs the Greeks were moved
To do to the Dead that but now had been a King beloved.
Sharp the conflict; and the scales first here, and then there inclined;
For Zeus mourned His Child, and War's brawl diverted a sad mind!
To the Dead, too, 'twas a tribute. For it to go on still

He stretched night—a pall—when Death is freer to work his will.
Even a while He doubted, as before Sarpedon died,
Of the death of Patroclus, upon which mode to decide—
Whether slay him now by Hector's hand, or should he remain
For a period careering in triumph through the Plain?
And this was the course He chose; frightened Hector from the Field,
By his example making Trojans and Lycians yield
Patroclus the joy of stripping Sarpedon's armour off.
Provision for the Body was His own charge; that enough.
Apollo bore It, bare, dabbled with gore and dust, away;
Bathed, anointed, in garb inviolable by decay;
Then saw it was wafted home from slough of slain friends and foes;
Lapped, with his race, in a soft eternity of repose.

The body and armour remained the spoil of Patroclus, who pursues a triumphant course.

A fatal boon,
He might have overlived life's noon, even its afternoon!
Obeying Friend and Patron he would have been praised and blest!
Yet how for Youth to halt when Zeus fans the fire in its breast!
For life emerged from Shadow to turn when it has begun,
To feel that it is driving the Chariot of the Sun!
Shouting "Onward!" to the horses and the Charioteer,
He had passed the Rampart, leaped over the Trench, and drawn near

To the God-built Wall. Now he forgot all Achilles told.
Spying a jutting angle that might, as he thought, give hold
For hands and knees, he clambered—as if by himself he could
Storm Ilium! On a tower angry Apollo stood.
Thrice the God, mute, hustled him off; but when, for the fourth time,
In intoxication of success, he essayed to climb,
The God spoke out: "Begone! thinkest 'tis for thee to destroy,
What Destiny has denied to thy Better—this great Troy?"
Patroclus drew in awe far back; but failed to comprehend
The spirit of the God's warning. It could have but one end.
Hector lost heart; o'erwhelmed by the fury of the attack,
He was inclined to order his broken battalions back
Within the Wall. Apollo dissuaded him. Now, disguised
As Asius, brother to Queen Hecuba, he advised
To quit the Skæan Gates, and meet Patroclus on the Plain.

Apollo advanced in front, invisible in the train of rank and file: Zeus determines that doomed Hector shall repeat his triumphs.

Among Achæans he spread a sense
As of coming disaster, while for Troy the influence
Was an inspiration of victory. Hector did not stay

To run a tilt against other chariots on his way,
But drove at Patroclus ; and he, in his left hand, a spear
With his right, jumping down, hurled at Hector's Charioteer,
Kebriones, a craggy lump he had snatched up ; the stone
Struck the forehead between the eyes, and crushed the entire bone.
With fearless courage Patroclus seized a foot of the Dead
To drag, and Hector, quitting his Car, caught hold by the head—
Lions for a stag—east, south, winds to wrench an oak—abreast
They strove ; but the Greeks won as the Sun passed towards the West.
And still raged Patroclus ; drunk with blood thrice he broke the rank,
Returning by a lane lined each side by a gory bank.
Twenty-seven deaths were the sum—but now Apollo made
Himself a mantle of darkness, and followed the fourth raid ;
Smote Patroclus, dizzy-blind, sent the helmet from his head
Rolling in the dust, snapped the spear as if it were a reed,
Loosed the breastplate star-studded, and tumbled the belt, and shield
That had sheltered him from head to foot, down upon the Field.
Goddess Até had him, clutched, froze the brain power ; he stood
Dazed and paralyzed.
Then, young Euphorbus, a Trojan, good
Beyond his years on horseback, speed of foot, and with the spear,

Novice in war, gave Patroclus the first wound, coming near—
A stroke between the shoulders—then, having plucked from the skin
His spear, ran to his company back for refuge therein ;—
No match for a Patroclus he, a mere boy, even then.
However, as—instinct, more than consciously—to his Men
The Hero dragged backwards, Hector pushed through to the front rank,
And, unresisted, drove his spear—a death wound—through the flank :
" So but this," he gloried, " has come, Patroclus, of thy tale
Of sacking Troy, and bearing off our women when ye sail ;
Of orders by Achilles to bring him the tunic torn
From my breast red with my heart's blood, that this day I had worn.
No account took ye of me in war, or foreboding feel
That my spear would give thee to vultures for a dainty meal ! "
Faint the accents in reply : " Hector, 'tis thy time to boast ;
But Zeus and Phœbus have giv'n thee victory at my cost ;
They took my armour off. Had it been twenty such as thou,
My spear would have laid the whole throng of my assailants low.
Of Immortals I charge my death on Phœbus, and to Fate ;
For Men, Euphorbus wounded first ; Hector, thou camest late.
Strip the armour. But remember, thou may'st not wear it long.

Lo! thy hands, Achilles! theirs the force, Death's, and Fate's the Strong!"

With last words mourning a lost manhood's prime, the spirit fled,

Wheresoever to sojourn, beside not within the Dead.

Vainly Hector called after it: "Who knows it may not be

Myself that am bid to work on Achilles Fate's decree?"

Then, leaving the armour to chance, and plucking out the spear,

He chased in vain the fugitive steeds, and Charioteer.

ZEUS PITIES MAN

Zeus might have been content to leave passions of mortal men
To seethe in their earthly cauldron, as wild beasts in their den;
But sight of the steeds of Achilles feeling for Man's woes
Forced the Sire of Gods and Lord of Heaven to interpose.
The pair with ease had outrun Hector; but when he ceased to pursue,
Returned until the Body of Patroclus was in view.
There, standing aloof from the turmoil, the two Immortal Steeds reeked nought, except
That the man they loved was dead; and sorrowfully they wept
For him who now lay trodden beneath soldier Trojans' feet.
With many a sharp flick of the whip, with many a threat,
With blandishments full many, and with speech both rough and kind,
Automedon prayed, ordered, them to leave the Field behind.
Every stable device he tried; it was all in vain;
Their obstinate resolve was where the corpse was to remain.

Immovable they halted, as some column stiff and stark
Raised the sepulchre of lord or lady within to mark.
Hoofs planted on the ground, they held the lone chariot there
In pining and regret for their loved, dead Charioteer.
As they stooped, their manes in an ambrosial cascade broke,
Besmeared with mire and warm tears, on either side of the yoke.
Zeus, seeing them weep, was moved; the thunder began to roll,
As in pity for their grief, He held converse with His soul:
"Poor wretches, what possessed Olympus to give you away,
Immortals like to ourselves, exempt from earthly decay,
To share in service of Peleus, his son here, and his clan,
The woes that are the lot of ever unfortunate Man;
For nowhere exists a Thing so distressful from its birth
To its death of creatures that breathe and creep upon the earth.
But no mortal worm, ev'n Hector at this height of his pride,
Shall drive Immortals—if a Goddess's child may—or ride
In the chariot they draw:—
Enough for him that he strips
The Dead, and pursues the Greeks to their tents and to their Ships.
Master you? not he! I, Zeus, forbid it! See! I inspire
Spring in ev'ry limb, and set your passionate hearts on fire.
Be guided by Automedon; bear him in safety out
To the Myrmidon lines, forth from the *mêlée* and the rout!"

So Balius and Xanthus, at the voice they knew of yore,
Treasuring still inside their breasts their anguish, but before
Trojan hand could clutch the reins, had whirled the chariot far
Outside the volcano into the deep fringe of the war.
Upon all sides the battle raged; red-hot the passion burned;
And the fortunes of Greece and Troy continually turned.
Zeus purposed the fight to be close; accordingly, He gave
Licence to Pallas—right glad she—to fire her Greeks to save
The Dead from outrage; so, from Heaven swooping down she came,
And stirred Menelaus and each Ajax to avert the shame.
Yet again inclined the balance in Troy's favour; Hector, proud
Of the armour he had stripped off Patroclus, fiercely mowed
His way through the adverse ranks; each spear of his reached its mark.
To spread the terror also Zeus shook His Ægis; and dark
Grew Ida; lightnings flashed; a long echoing burst of loud
Thunder shook the mountain to its very base; and a cloud
Descended, and enveloped the Greek chieftains, while clear air
Breathed elsewhere about, till in indignant wrath and despair,
For right, bare justice, Ajax pleaded: "Light, Zeus, grant us light!

Then death, if it please Thee; but oh! not to die in the night!"
Zeus granted that much of the prayer; but not so but that still—
Equal valour against valour, will equal against will—
One side's best champions, jostled, battered, hammered, bruised and crushed,
Inch by inch, foot by foot, and yard by yard, were backward pushed.
Vainly Menelaus and Meriones from the fray
Raised the corpse shoulder-high, out of the blood-pool where it lay;
Down at Hector's rush it rolled, to the Town now, now the Fleet,
Quivering, slipping, soughing, in red mire, under mailed feet,
Foes', or friends';—
while, like to a bird wing-broken, fluttered-by,
Despairing of its release, a pale Ghost in agony!
And Ajax's stiff, haughty soul itself confessed to fear,
Not for himself, but the dead, for the Friend he held most dear.
Hard to stoop, and beg for help—from Peleides most of all—
But, with Gods and Fortune adverse, loftiest spirits fall.
To the ships Antilochus came, bearing his cry of woe,
Weeping:
"Achilles, in the dust lies our Patroclus, low,
Slain by Hector, who utters, in thy armour clad, a boast
To give the Body to Troy's dogs in spite of all our host!"

He found Achilles, who counting long on his Friend's return,
Had caught no sound but might mean either that men joy, or mourn.
It must be, he mused, the Trojans were difficult to beat;
That when compelled at last to yield, they made a slow retreat.
Patroclus even might have had to drive them to their Wall.
But the Plain was wide; he must wait for news till evenfall;
If long the delay, the more eventful would be the tale.
Attempt more than he was bid; be so rash as try to scale
The Wall? Incredible! Besides, had not Achilles heard
In confidence, through Thetis, but from Zeus, on His own word,
That not for himself, let alone his Friend, was left the renown
Of being the Chosen of Fate to storm and sack Troy Town!

Alas, for the Friend! for the easy faith with which he sent
Youth and valour to a battlefield pledged to be content
To repulse; not pursue!
"For Achilles' unending thirst
Of revenge upon Troy! And, first, on Hector the accurst!

But vengeance without arms ?
Nothing for me except to weep ! "
Thetis heard the tears drop ;
and at once rose up from the Deep ;
" Yes ; arms ; and vengeance also on the Slayer, in the strife,
At a price—a Mother to pay !—just a life for a life ! "
" Blood I must have, whatever to Me, to You, be the cost ;
My life ? How bear to live-on when my Patroclus is lost ? "
Enough—his Mother was gone :—
Meanwhile his dearest one lay,
Doomed, so it seemed, to Troy's scavenger dogs for play, and prey.
But far from Hera, Pallas, to let unburied remain
The body of the Champion who had in their cause been slain !
Down from Olympus floated rainbow-winged Iris to bring
Word thence—though the Queen's will was to thwart the will of the King—
" Be Achilles, although without armour, up and about ;
Bid him, heeding nought but his dead, stand by the Trench and Shout ! "
Up sprang Achilles ; and Pallas round his great shoulders flung
Her Ægis serpent-fringed ; and Divine that She is—then hung
About his head a golden cloud-coronet from which came,
Of her contrivance, leaping jets of endless angry flame.
As when a gang of corsairs a sudden descent have made,

Upon an isle, and its men sally forth against the raid,
Trying ugly battle's fortune ; while, from far off they call
On Allies, to man ship and help, by beacons on the Wall ;
So, backing the rampart, Achilles, visible alone,
Roared, flashed, through the dusk, death to the foes' side, life to his own.
His shout, doubled by Pallas —an avalanche—froze the air.
'Twas like the chill of horror unspeakable, and despair,
At the heart of some beleagured town, when the trumpets' blare
Heralds the beginning of the storming by a wild rout.
So rang a clear message of doom in that strange, brazen shout !
It appalled all living things ; ev'ry long-maned Trojan horse,
Fate-foreboding, rebelling at curbs to its headlong course,
Rushed its chariot backwards : each charioteer at the sight
Of Athena's fire shooting its inexhaustible light
From the head of Peleides, partook of his horses' fright.
Thrice from above the Greek trench boomed those tempestuous cries ;
And thrice city-wards recoiled Troy's warriors, and Allies,
There, then, from their chariots fall'n, in their bright armour clad,
Lay twelve Trojan chiefs, the best and noblest, gory and dead.
'Neath slain and their arms, his comrades, sated with carnage, found,

And laid on his bier, their loved One; then, standing all around,
Brought to the Trench.
The Swift-foot following, with slow, sad tread,
Wept o'er the wounds that had robbed him of the fond, faithful Dead—
Of the Friend he sent forth at morning glorious—and now,
At evening, received from the hard-fought Field returned —but how!
So, a sudden hush; for, by Hera Queen of Heaven's will,
The tireless Sun, reluctant, had sunk in Ocean; and—still
Twilight stealing softly on—both Armies paused from the jar
And fury of battle in the evenly balanced war.

The peril is so near, even to the Phthian squadron, that Achilles yields to Patroclus and sends him to the field. He begins a victorious career by the death of Sarpedon. Continuing until rebuked by Apollo on Troy's walls, he has the insolence to hope to storm them. Fighting in the *mêlée* he, in the confusion of brain and warfare, is wounded successively by young Euphorbus, Apollo, Hector. Hector puts on the dead man's armour; would have, but for their flight, caught and driven the chariot horses. Zeus looks on, and pities both their master for the day and them. As for the combat, he intervenes mainly to keep it afoot. He has arranged for the worthy obsequies of His son, Sarpedon. For Patroclus, whatever the agonizing of the Spirit, let them struggle over the dead. At length Greek hope and muscles failed. Swift Antilochus ran and told Achilles that Patroclus was slain and his body in peril. Hera and Athena played a desperate stroke for its deliverance. Trojans were awed and pause in the the struggle. Achilles, without further opposition, conducts it within the Greek lines.

THE HEAVENLY ARMS

Thetis, as she had pledged a mother's word, was come
To beg Arms of Hephæstus at his Olympian home.
Where on Earth a Palace fair as that on the Holy Hill ?
Could there be ? Was not this the work of a surpassing skill ?
Graceful, gracious Charis ran forward to embrace the Guest,
And she brought the news to her Spouse at his forge in glad haste ;
For oft he had told her how his Mother Hera in shame
At the mis-shapen infant she had borne—Immortal—lame !
Hurled him into the Deep, where Thetis and Euphrosyne
Comforted and nursed him in the Palaces of the Sea.
An odd limping lump he moved as lightly as his true heart
To offer her he revered the best homage of his Art.
"Oh!" he exclaimed: "That as certainly as I shall create
Wonders in Arms, I could charm them against Death too and Fate!"

In his high workshop twenty bellows blew at his behest,
Each, at heat toned by a thought, or subsided into rest.

First, in the white glow he cast brass nor point, nor edge, could pierce,
With tin, and gold, and silver, stirring all to boil in fierce
Convulsions. Then, his strong arms set the anvil on its block;
And as tongs gripped, and, with roar like Etna's, the hammer struck,
Images rose in dazzling fire, like pageants in a dream;
Phantasms of his quick brain; figures dancing on a sun's beam.
Lo! a five-fold shield, fitted with a silver belt for him
Who should bear it in battle, hung from the bright, triple rim.
And ah! the infinitude of designs he chased thereon,
Earth and Heaven, the Seas, the full Moon, and the gracious Sun,
Pleiades, and Hyades, Giant Orion, and there,
Too busy watching Orion to dip in Ocean, the Bear.
A miracle of Art; and instinct, as all such, with soul
That brought it into existence, and waits to stir the whole.
As the Heavenly Artificer thought out a design,
And fused it on the anvil, 'twas stamped on the Shield Divine.
Whenever the Master gazed, from the surface life arose;
Then a shadow issued, and back it sank into repose.
Still, as at Art's birth, a Master's eye has but to behold,
A miracle will be renewed, as with the Shield five-fold.
Nor only Stars and Seas, but two cities Hephæstus wrought.
Marriages there were; and brides being from their chambers brought;

Young men and maidens formed the dance, circling in mazy rounds;
Pipes were tuned, lyres were strung; there was a rapture of sweet sounds.
Surely a gay festival! May it last! But look again!
The feast is become a brawl; a wedding-guest has been slain!
Has blood-money not been paid? "Nay," "Yea." Let the Court decide.
Elders sit; Pleaders plead; Heralds hush. This clear; a man died.
Shame on Civil feuds! But see, here is graven open war.
Two Armies in array are allied; they are come from far.
One would storm the City, and share the spoil with its Ally;
The Other would crush the scorpion-nest out of memory.
Meantime, the warrior-townsmen gathered outside the Gate,
Had arranged an ambuscade, and lie stealthily in wait.
With both sides Discord, and Tumult mixed, while murderous Fate,
Her mantle blood-red, cares but for the quarrel to close late;
Joyous as victory wavers, here, there, again, again;
Piling up higher, and yet higher, mountains of the slain;
While to eyes with insight the graven figures seem to move;
As if live men, on a battlefield, round their Dead they strove!
Fancy turned; the kind, peace-loving soul in the lame God woke.

It might have been in Phthia ; on Troy's Plain ere the storm broke.
As graver skimmed, the surface ever widened of the Shield ;
It hovered, and there grew rich glebe, thrice ploughed, a fallow field.
To and fro the labourers drove the beasts, their special care,
And as each came to the end of a furrow with his pair,
Ready stood the farmer with, in his hand, a cup of wine.
Ah ! effort of a ploughman to be first to touch the line !
The wonder that to the eye following the chisel's track,
Its fine indent had turned the gleam of the gold a mould-black !
A harvest next. As the reapers cut, sickles in their hands,
Three binders, behind, tied sheaves, tall blades, full ears, with bands.
Boys gathered in bundles strays fallen by the way, to tie
With the sheaves. A King, with sceptre, joyful but mute, stood by.
Heralds meanwhile, awaiting the reapers, work done, prepare
For supper 'neath yon oak an ox, sacrifice, hearty fare.
In due order a vineyard, the grapes black, shot through with gold,
The clusters mid green leaves tasking the silver poles to hold.
An azure trench and hedge about : one path to enter in
When the hour should have arrived for the vintage to begin.

Already it is time! See! the young girls and boys are come
To gather, and bear the ripe fruit in woven baskets home.
Listen! somewhere in gladness of the vintage sounds a note
On a harp, and somewhere song, a scrap, from a tuneful throat;
And straightway a concourse with spontaneous accord beat
Time, and a rapid river rolls of skipping, dancing feet.
Yet again the impulse shifts. Lowing rush the cattle all,
Kine, calves, and bull—gold and tin—at dawn from many a stall.
Four herdsmen—golden—attend them, and nine hounds, brave and fleet—
What the danger that these would not amply suffice to meet?
They are bound for their accustomed meadows, and with one will
Make for the rushy bed where trickles the murmuring rill.
But as the bull gallops onwards, heading the foremost rank,
Two dread lions burst from the reeds upon the streamlet's bank.
They have dragged him bellowing off. The herdsmen urge in vain
Their dogs; at safe distance these bark, but will not seize the twain.
Earth is sport for Force and Wrath; even when Peace seems to bloom,

Fate may have been commissioning her ministers of doom :
Heaven's self is not free from them, as its Immortals know :
Witness the lame God, who had felt how roughly its storms blow.
In his work he had pictured evil ; but he could not part
From it without attesting that joy is the aim of Art.
He was glad as the grave tracing his brain's vision drew
Long woodland glades of emulous enchantment into view,
Flocks of white sheep and folds, with, nowhere, dream of savage beast,
And shepherds living lives, each an innocent, endless feast.
In a garden-hall like that planned for Ariadne, bands
Danced, youths and fair virgins, clasping fast one another's hands.
The maidens wore fine linen robes, and wreaths from sweet flow'rs strung ;
Shining tunics the youths ; gold swords from belts of silver hung.
Now, round and round they whirled ; and now a leader of the troop
Would thread it without break, and return, a sinuous loop ;
Still—the artist temper—not content with his triumphs till
He sent two tumblers singing, spinning, just to prove his skill.
Lastly, for the uttermost rim of the Shield, he thought good

To roll old Oceanus, the World River's giant flood.
Tideless and stormless, with its irresistible embrace,
That forbids Earth, Air, Seas to press beyond it into Space.
Lighter tasks, though beyond Man's wits, the corslet that outshone
The flame of any earthly fire, and beamed forth like the Sun;
Greaves of tin that swayed with every muscle as it pressed;
A strong helmet, curiously dight, and its golden crest.
The whole, creation of the smith and sculptor, poet, God,
That had waked out of gross metal at this lame Being's nod,
He swept into his brawny arms, and bore where sat apart
Thetis, with one image—the doomed Son—in sad eyes and heart.
Thanks these, silent, spoke; and, clutching the Arms, as hawk its prey,
With self-massacring haste she swooped to the Fleet—where dawned Day!
On the Dead Achilles wept still; then over him, on all,
A something of suspense of expectation, seemed to fall.
Armour panoply, piercing the tent canvas without rent,
Dazzling, from immensity, on the flooring of the tent.
None braver are than Myrmidons; but in their sheer surprise,
As at a planet blazing on them from the morning skies,
The rest in wild panic fled forth; not so was made their Chief.

And, higher still, while proud of Arms beyond belief,
Though his first thought was of the means he now possessed to meet
His Trojan foe abhorred, and grind to dust beneath his feet.

Thetis, by the desire of Achilles, visits the Palace of Hephæstus on Olympus, to beg armour. Willingly he complies. We are told of the wondrous art. The forge is described, and the metals. Rich and of the best quality, they would pass the most delicate tests by human armourers. The supreme merit is in the Divine artificer. He thinks into His furnace and the forms forthwith breathe themselves into the metals. By the end of the visit a complete equipment is in the grasp of Thetis, and she conveys it to the quarters of Her Son. Of its fitting there is no question. Her Son's first procedure is to call an Assembly and confess his personal guilt in confounding a personal with a national grievance.

"For the sake of a girl of Lyrnessus."

As soon as the national forces were ready he was prepared with all his own followers to join its ranks. In effect he commands-in-chief the Greek Army, and as such assails forthwith the Trojan forces, already on foot beside the invaders, in accordance with Hector's rash belief that they were masters of the field. He splits them into two blocks, trampling down the half with which he begins. The whole is a cruel massacre, leaving Achilles at the walls :

"Till within the Skæan Gates had passed all—but Priam's Son."

On the Dead Achilles wept still; so, they who had been bred
With him; whom but yesterday he gloriously had led.
Then, a sudden hush. No form was visible; but word—
A Goddess's—"Behold!"—and, a crash, thunderous, was heard;
And Shield, Corslet, Greaves, Helm, piercing canvas without a rent,
Clanged, as from Immensity, on the flooring of the tent.
So, vengeance was assured; but next how for him to retrace
Steps disloyal to Achæa, and re-unite his Race.
Before the assembled host he in brief speech straight and strong,
Confessed his guilt for visiting on it a private wrong:
"Would Artemis," he too frankly wished, "with a shaft from her bow
Had sped from off our Fleet the damsel to the World Below,
E'er fellow Greeks had bitten in death agony the soil—
And this for a girl of Lyrnessus, my share of the Spoil!"
Agamemnon, with one wound in limb, had ten in his pride.
But, shifting all blame for the strife on Até from his side,
Was, as liable for her mischief, "willing to restore
Briseis, with ten talents, wares, and seven women more."
Thus, back the fair girl moaned: "came to what, a home once, now was none,
For was not the Captive's friend and comforter, kind Patroclus, gone?"

The duel of Achilles and Hector was unequal. The disappointment contrived against the Trojan by the trick of deluding him with an imaginary brother, Deiphobus, and Athena's restoration of the spear of Achilles to him, affect a modern reader's sense of fairness. But it is enough that the Fates had decided. It is useless to complain of partisanship in Olympian Gods and Goddesses. We must be content with the majesty of the spectacle—the Greek host on the one side, all Troy on the walls, old King Priam, Queen and Mother, and a dying Hero, in their shuddering view. And yet the confronting of the complaining Ghost with his triumphant Friend who delays his bestowal of a handful of dust from a funeral Pyre is its equal.

TILL WITHIN THE SKÆAN GATES HAD PASSED ALL—BUT PRIAM'S SON!

Lo! Achilles rushing nigher and nigher to the Wall!
Like that star of Autumn, Dog of Orion, Chief of all
In splendour, and as baleful. Priam gazed on him as Fate;
And prayed Hector, while time was, to enter the Skæan Gate.
He besought for the City's sake that he alone could save;
For Himself, his hard ills, his sole hope of a quiet grave.
His Mother joined her entreaties in as piteous strain,
To as little effect—how could they have not been in vain?
He heard; he answered not; his soul was seething hot with care,
For things he might have done, had not; have dared, and might not dare;
Enter the Gate? and to meet Polydamas face to face!
Save himself? and live in Troy? Witness to his own disgrace!
Then, from Possibles that to him Impossibles would seem,
To schemes fantastic, easier for One like Him to dream;—

Lay all arms aside, breastplate, crested helmet, sword and spear,
And, waiting defenceless, until Achilles should draw near,
Pledge Troy, if Achilles and Hellas made peace, to restore
Helen, and treasures of her home that Paris with her bore,
Besides—and in addition—half the wealth, Ilium's own,
A fine for the guilt and the warfare's bloodshed to atone ;—
As if he knew not the Swift-foot would have no jot more care
For his helplessness than hound for helplessness of a hare.
More wear of thought his tired brain refused, but, as soldier's would,
Called, and impatiently for the arbitrament of blood.
Armed he decided to wait there, and see which of the two
Zeus meant to favour with victory, himself, or his foe.
Alas ! and alas ! for all the bravery of the brave !
A blaze of armour, as flame, or sun at dawn, and a wave,
Wild panic, swept from where he had stood, Hector at the sight
Of his foe approaching ! His limbs hurried him into flight !
He fled under the City Wall, along the wide high-way.
Achilles recognized, and followed, as a hawk his prey.
Past the Citadel, the wind-tossed wild Fig-tree, to the spot

Where the sources of eddying Skamander rise, one hot,
Curling up in steam, one even in summer icy-cold,
Falling into sculptured basins. Here, in blest days of old,
Troy's wives and daughters washed their bright robes; here, now many eyes
From Wall, Plain, and Skies watch two Armed Men racing—and the Prize?—
No tripod, or fair slave—for a Land's Bulwark—for a Life—
To sate a blood-lust, deal a death-blow in two Peoples' strife!
Zeus pitied Hector; had a third way, between life and death,
Been awful, would gladly have lengthened his expiring breath.
The Mighty One knows too well that Heaven is not All-Great;
That its chief duty is to shape in acts Decrees of Fate.
But He declared His will to hear a plea that would empow'r
A respite from this agony, if only for an hour.
Troy's friends were dumb; Pallas protested against aught that might
Dim, or defer, the triumph of Achilles, and of Right.
For answer she was bid descend on Earth, as she inclined,
And witness there what had always been in her Father's mind.
Meantime the Chase went on. 'Twas as when on the hills a hound,
Having roused a fawn from its favoured form, runs it to ground—

Runs, and loses, and finds again; so, Hector, found fresh force
To run, when Achilles seemed to have caught him in the course.
Or, as flies obliquely to elude a hawk's swoop, a dove,
Would Hector manœuvre to near the Wall, in hope, above,
An archer, if Achilles followed, might mark a loose joint
Even in armour Divine, and pierce at some vital point;
While Achilles, guessing the purpose, turned him to the Plain,
Beyond arrow's range from the Wall. So too it was again
As with a hunt in Dreamland, when neither can the game make
Its escape from pack and hunters, nor can these overtake.
Even thus must Hector have failed earlier to compete
With Achilles in superior nimbleness of feet,
Had not Phœbus breathed continual doggedness and pride
Never to confess defeat as he floated by his side.
But Zeus felt Fate brooked no more delay. Suddenly He hung
His Golden Balance in the sky. The scales an instant swung,
Uncertainly—for Men a Thunder-cloud—to Gods alone
Visible for that they held—stern Fate's Weights two Deaths;—in One
The Greek's—Trojan's in the Other. Then, as the Gods held their breath—

And sadly Heavenwards Phœbus rose—down sank
" Hector's Death ! "
For the fourth time now had Skamander's double
springs been passed.
The Greek Army lined the strange Course, by States
its legions massed.
From tower and battlement citizens of Troy looked
down,
Feeling on that race depended existence for their Town.
Mute, tongues, arms ; for Achilles, as he sped—a flash
of fire—
Signed to keep friends' spears at rest on pain of his
mortal ire.
Perdition ! if one from the ranks laid the Murderer low,
Leaving nothing more for him than to deal a spiteful
blow.
ThenA thena, who had seen the Scale sinking, stayed the
race ;
" Let Achilles take breath ; she brings him Hector face
to face."
Next, in guise Deiphobus, she lured Hector to believe :
" His dearest Brother had left their Parents in Troy
to grieve
For another lost rather than not give him, lonely
there,
Ilium's foremost champion, the aid of a second spear."
Alas ! for guileless Hector ; in admiring love he cried :
" Most precious always, welcome more than ever to
my side ! "
So, the One—the Two in deceitful fancy—turning
back,
To meet his hunter, re-measured part of the well-worn
track :

"No more," he challenged, "Son of Peleus, shalt thou see me flee;
I have steadfastly resolved to stand, die or conquer thee!
But let us swear that whichsoever of us twain shall win
Will respect, and give, the Dead, stripped of armour, to his kin."
"Compacts for Us!" Achilles cried: "Accurst, how can there be!
Tell men and lions, lambs and wolves to bargain and agree
How to divide a carcass! alive n'er may I and thou
Plight mutual faith, with Heav'n to witness, exchange a vow.
Nought can we have in common, but standing, as here we are,
Pour, I or thou, a libation—blood—to the God of War!
It behoves thee to dare and do; summon thy fortitude;
Pallas gives thee to my spear—one thou wilt not now elude!
Remember, pay for, my comrades, my Dearest thou hast slain;
Be thou an atonement, once for all, for my grief, their pain!"
Therewith he hurled his great spear; but Hector escaped the blow—
Which spent itself, fixed in the earth beyond—by stooping low.
Athena restored it to Achilles, yet so that nought
Was seen by Hector of the wrong to him she had wrought;

"High talk," cried he, "designed to unnerve a foe. If I die,
It will not be of wounds from a javelin as I fly.
At worst I fear a spear thrust in my breast; though may Divine
Grace to Troy grant that thou her bane die first from one of mine!"
His spear aimed at Achilles struck the centre of the Shield;
But, unable to pierce, recoiled, and fell far on the Field.
With a loud shout he called on Deiphobus for a spear;
And understood at once how Deiphobus could not hear,
For that Pallas had deceived him, taking his Brother's shape.
Yes; Death stared at him; and he knew that there was no escape:
"Forsaken by Zeus long since; by Phœbus himself of late;
With none even of his House to retard the feet of Fate;
Be it so, I, Hector, cannot accept a coward's end;
I will do a deed to which future Ages must attend."
His sword, hung by his side, he drew, weighty and sharp, that none
Throughout Troy City could wield and wave, but his arm alone.
His being, a passion—a despair—just one stroke—the whole—
He whirled on Achilles, whose more furious fire of soul
Troubled not the cruel calm in which he strode to engage
His foe, savagely, coldly sure of means to wreak his rage.
In his right hand he poised his spear, with brass head shining bright

As Hesperus, fairest star in the waning hour of night.
Ah duel too ill-matched! How could sword ever hope
to near,
Keen though it were, the range of the eight-foot Pelian
Spear!
Achilles at once with fencer's absolute skill would ward
Every desperate attempt to break within his guard,
And search, as was likely a past lord of the arms should
know,
Where it was most effectual to land a mortal blow.
Yes; it was where the collar-bone links neck and
shoulders; here
The brass was thinner.
And the halloo, as burst in the Spear!
"Fool! when thou spoiledst Patroclus not to have borne
in mind
That thou wert leaving still an Avenger for him behind,
Who would see that dogs and unclean birds rend thee
to thy shame,
But triumphantly entomb thy prey, glorify his name!"
Hector, feeling death upon him, in accents low but
clear,
For the organ of speech had been spared by the heavy
spear,
Asked: "At thy knees, if I could; by thy Parents, by
thy Soul;
I conjure thee, suffer not the dogs of the Fleet to foul
My body, as if carrion; but, of thy grace, permit
My Parents—fix the price in brass and gold—to ransom
it.
I, Hector, to sue to thee! Yet here in the dust I pray,
Send me back to Ilium, that my people there may lay
My body on a funeral pyre, and my tattered Ghost

Descend, although humbled now, from when once I led Troy's host!"

"Hound," was the answer, "waste breath praying me to mitigate

Chastisement I joy to inflict as minister of Fate.

I would that my own fire and hatred worked in me to tear

And eat thy flesh in return for the havoc of thy spear.

At no price whatever shall leave to scare the dogs be bought,

Were offers by endless relays of envoys to be brought.

Nor should I, for thy Mother to weep over thee, and fold

In her arms, let Priam rescue thee for thy weight in gold!"

Once more Hector: "I hoped not for the grant of my appeal;

To wake compassion for my lot, soften a heart of steel.

But death unlocks for me the Future; I foresee an hour

When thy ruthlessness to me in this high tide of thy pow'r

May infuse into Heaven's cup of wrath an element

Wanting, hadst thou inclined, though late, to pity and relent.

No? Recollect hereafter, when Paris has bent his bow

From these Gates, and Apollo guides the shaft, what I ask now!"

Death's shadow fell; the Soul, with a sigh after Youth's joy, fled;

And Achilles, plucking forth his Spear, spoke to the deaf Dead:

"Enough for thee that thou hast died; when Zeus shall draw my lot

Is His concern—but to-day's deed, Mine, will not be forgot!"

Achilles stripped Dead Hector of armour, left body bare,

A sight at which Greek rank and file, a multitude, might stare.

They wondered at the Hero's stature as they stood around;

And none could bear to quit without endeavouring to wound:

"Surely," they mocked, "this Hector is milder than when he came,

Torch in hand, driving us sea-ward, to set the Fleet aflame!"

As for Achilles, his first thought had been to try the Wall,

On the chance the Trojans, losing heart, might surrender all;

"But Patroclus lies at the Ships, unmourned, tombless as yet.

Others' dead may be forgotten; never will I forget.

Form, Achæan Youths, for your march to the Ships; and chant clear

Your triumphant Pæans for Him there in your midst to hear,

Trojans, we march beside your towers; dare to bar our road

As Hector is dragged whom ye citizens revered as God!"

Meanwhile, he bored both feet, binding each by a leathern thong

To his Chariot, leaving the head to tumble along.

Then he mounted with the Arms; and the steeds, as if they knew

They outraged the Slayer of their beloved Patroclus, flew.
Pitiful spectacle! the Body jolted up and down,
Besmirching the blue-black locks, its whole self from foot to crown!
For Zeus, though with grave searchings of heart had agreed, nay, planned,
That Hector's foes might have their will of him in his own land;
Even in his Mother's sight, who with hair plucked out, veil torn,
Groaned to behold her Boast in the dust, and their Troy forlorn—
In his Father's, the old, old King's, who angrily complained
Of remaining within the Gates, of having been restrained
From rushing out to beg the Body, though with a last breath,
And if death instead, by the Spear that pierced him, "Welcome, Death!"
Alas for Hector's Wife! She heard not how the battle went.
In a room of her house withdrawn she sat apart, intent
Upon a web she wrought, splendid with vari-coloured dyes,
Worthy to adorn a Palace with rich embroideries.
She had bid her attendants to prepare, as oft before,
A bath for the Hero to rid him of the mire of war.
But a sound of screaming and wailing echoed from the Wall.
In a sudden fit of trembling she let the loom-rod fall:
"Come," she sobbed: "Follow me; the heart quivers within my breast;

My limbs fail me as if benumbed ; and yet they cannot
rest.
Hark ! is not that the voice in anguish of our Queen
I hear ?
What ! if Hector, who deigns not to keep the ranks,
as I fear,
Should have met Achilles alone ! "
Now, she was on the Wall ;—
And lo ! her Hector dead ! tied to the Victor's Car ! his
thrall !
Night closed her eyes ; she fell backwards in a swoon ;
from her head
Fluttered net, and veil, Aphrodité's gift, when she was
led
A Bride from Eëtion's Palace.
She awoke to know
Her world had crumbled into ruins, leaving nought
but we :
All was over ; other Greeks supped, then slept ;
Achilles, brooding on Patroclus, wept.
He longed for him, his manliness, and force
In action, counsel, his fire, and resource ;
Fights, voyages, joys, pains together borne ;
One Being theirs, and now alone, forlorn !
Vain to toss, from side to side, prone, supine ;
Useless circling to and fro, by the brine.
Dawn at last ! and to drive the Car around
The tomb of his Patroclus—hallowed Mound—
A track not through remorse of his unlaid
With skin and tatters from a carcass flayed.
He returned, having flung " That " in the sun,
To take what rest he might, his duty done.
He knew not that Apollo suffered near

No foul insect, would let no pebble tear,
But the twelfth morn; and the mad fit raged yet.
So some Gods scolded the rest when they met:
"Thankless to grant Achilles still his way
In maltreating Hector, who in his day
Served you; allow the author of his doom
To deny him all dead men's right, a tomb."

ACHILLES AND HIS DEAD

Thrice the Myrmidons drove their steeds round where in his white shroud
Lay their dear dead Patroclus with lamenting deep and loud;
For Thetis inspired a thirst for weeping; and weep they must,
So that the tears of rough soldiers moistened the very dust.
Then, Achilles, having unbound Hector's Body, and thrown
Before his Friend's bier, where it fell ingrained with dust, and prone,
Vowed the camp dogs should have it, and leave so mangled and torn,
That his Mother would not know the Darling whom she had borne.
His men supped; Atreides had prepared for the Chiefs a feast,
And earnestly desired to have Achilles for a guest.
He would neither bathe, nor eat, nor drink, until he had laid
Patroclus on his pyre; but for the morrow morn he prayed
Atreides to send woodmen to the forest, Ida's crown,

He quitted the Princes for the shore,
Where, in a quiet spot, he lay by the waves, grieving sore;
Yet, for he was very weary, slept.
Then, Patroclus came;
Spirit—but as in life—garb, size, voice, lovely eyes, the same:
"Asleep, Achilles? I forgotten? Never did I find
Myself forgotten in life; I was ever in thy mind.
Give me my tomb at once, that I may pass to my own place.
Now, flesh holds me back, though Spirit, of toiling human race.
Refused me companionship across the River; I roam
Exiled on Earth; by Hades disowned; between them with no home.
But clasp hands! Thou art dearest still; and I shall not return
After I have partaken of the flame for which I yearn,
Never again shall we sit—we two—communing apart
From comrades—though dear also—for we twain were one in heart.
Ah the bliss of our friendship! Thou knowest, a boy and I
Quarrelled at dice; and of a blow by me he chanced to die.
Therefore, by my Father, fearing a blood-feud, I was brought
To Phthia; and Peleus willed I should learn what thou wert taught.
So, as now in the flower of my age I have been torn
From thee by a cruel lot cast for me when I was born,
And for thee, my Friend, also it has been decreed to fall,

Cut off, as myself, in thy prime, under Ilium's Wall,
I pray, command thee—for our love's sake, do not disobey—
Let my ashes rest by thine, though I shall be far away."
Achilles agreed; for it was his own intent; and strove
To clasp hands.
Grasp the night winds that round a house, screaming, rove!
Gone the Ghost—with a surprise-note, as of bird waked by dawn;
Gone, as smoke dispersing, or tracings a night-frost has drawn.

THE FUNERAL OF PATROCLUS

The Myrmidons dressed their lines in all the full pomp of war,
The drivers had yoked their horses, each Chief stood in his Car.
Rank and file next, a storm-cloud, thousands, good at sword and spear,
With, in their midst, close friends of the Dead, carrying the Bier.
They had cut their flowing locks, which as flowers now they shed,
Strewing the whole Body of their Comrade, except the head.
It Achilles held, and kissed, conscious with increasing pain
That this was Farewell to one he should never see again!
But at a certain spot upon the Trojan Plain he stayed,
Of purpose then, as of old, the march of the cavalcade.
The Bier was set down, and the site traced for a mighty tomb
To hold Patroclus, and One more when He had reached his doom.

FUNERAL RITES OVER PATROCLUS

So the Spirit had his release.
Achilles sheared the locks he had saved till then.

As one by one the golden ringlets showered on the Bier!
The fountain of tears reopened, and all were weeping there.

Vast was the Pyre, and by love prepared for inflammability, yet it sulked.

Achilles adjured the winds, North, West,
With vows, and wine. Iris at his behest
Hurried to Thrace, the cave where cross-grained Zephryus as host
Chanced to be feasting the breezy brotherhood at his cost.
She stopped not there, being bound where the Æthiops afford
Entertainment to the Gods at their hospitable board.
But Boreas and Zephyr propelling a wall of cloud,
Lashed the sea into waves that towered high, and roared aloud.

In stormy glee they swept the Plain, and plunged within
the Pyre;
And it hissed, and exploded into tempestuous fire!
All night they tossed the embers together; and by the
Mound
Achilles from a gold cup poured libations on the ground.
As father by the pyre of his son, a young bridegroom,
groans,
So on him watching the flames devouring his Dear
One's bones.
At last shone Lucifer; and, dancing o'er the sea,
Dawn came
In saffron robe; and low was flickering the sighing
flame.

Patroclus in a pathetic dream had demanded of his beloved Achilles a speedy burial, as he drags about him useless flesh and bones. His Friend performed the obsequies. But he retains in dishonour the corpse of Hector, which, however, friendly Gods protect. Heavenly friends of Hector complain of the outrages to his body. Zeus favours them and Thetis is persuaded to recommend her Son to agree to a ransom. Iris is sent to advise Priam to undertake the mission. Priam goes willingly, and most successfully. The Iliad closes here with the Burial.

BODY OF HECTOR

An assembly of the Gods decides, with the consent of Thetis' who answers for Achilles, to arrange for him to surrender, for ransom, the body of Hector. Iris, sent by Zeus, announced to King Priam that he may safely in person visit Achilles, and return with the Body for its Burial. Zeus for more security sends Hermes to accompany the old King. Priam, against Hecuba's unwillingness, and that of his surviving children, accomplishes the journey. Hermes brings him within the apartment where Achilles broods over the loss of Patroclus. Suddenly He is aware He is being addressed; besought by the desolate father of Hector; and compared with His own lonely father Peleus. The picture Priam draws is irresistible; and the ransom is accepted, the still-hated body yielded. Priam returns a Conqueror, to a City for once believing in Cassandra. Within the Palace, in intervals of the Minstrelsy, they by turns lament Hector's death, the Wife, loss of her sole bulwark against slavery for herself, disinheritance for her child, the Mother execrates a monster she would rejoice to rend in pieces, and Helen regrets one who was sensible of nought in herself but the ideal of woman's charm! A student of the Iliad bids its wondrous Minstrel farewell, with regret, admiration, love.

PRIAM TO BEG HECTOR'S BODY

IRIS brings a message from Olympus. She found the
Palace echoing groans;
The King grovelling on the Courtyard stones,
Head and neck crusted with road mire; each Son
Blushing for living now their betters gone,
And mourning, less for ruin that come must,
Than for the strange sight—Priam in the dust;
Daughters, Daughters-in-law, swelling the flood
By fresh tears for their own suns set in blood.
None but Priam saw Iris there by him,
She spoke, and he quaked in every limb:
"Courage! Zeus sends me, boding thee no ill,
But to assure thee pity and good will.
Hector He honoured, and will let no more
His body lie unburied on the shore.
He chooses thee to give thy Son a grave
Among his People that he died to save.
Carry with thee a Ransom of a kind
To soothe and content: but, above all, mind
That thou go alone, except for one man
A Herald, and advanced in years, who can
Drive the mules; and when the whole work is done,
Go thou home, with the Body of thy Son.
Fear not; Zeus sends an escort wise and sure,

Hermes; in his charge thou wilt be secure.
As for Achilles, be in no alarm;
He will not harm thee, or let others harm.
Judge not by fits of passion, gusts of rage;
He stands in awe of Heaven, and can be sage,
Looking to the future. None better heeds
Laws of honour when a suppliant pleads!"
She had fulfilled her errand, and was gone,
Seen and heard by none but the King alone.
He with Hecuba his treasury sought,
And told her there the message Iris brought.
The Queen disbelieved: "Not enough?" she cried:
"To have lost Hector, but now thee beside!
He who slew the Son will rejoice the more,
Butcher! to add the Father to the score.
Trust his faith, pity? If Hector's flesh sate
Greek dogs, what can we do? it was his Fate!
Would it were his Slayer's for me to gnaw
His liver with my teeth, and devour raw!
What else his due for outraging a foe
Who had confronted him, and been laid low,
Unequally matched, not in course of flight,
But battling against odds, in manly fight?"
Priam answered: "Cease, thou canst not dissuade,
Mortal Prophets I might not have obeyed.
I heard and saw a Goddess face to face;
For me to doubt her would be a disgrace.
Death my lot? so be it. Only to die,
Hector in my arms, wept till my tears' source be dry!"
Then, opening his coffers, he chose thence,
For the ransom—all of high excellence—
Fine robes, and men's mantles, tunics, each set
Twelve, with rugs, ten talents, gold, of full weight,

Tripods, pans, and a cup of beauty rare.
Craving his Dead, ev'n that he did not spare.
By this time a strange rumour ran about;
A crowd thronged the Porch. Priam beat it out:
"Off! have ye no cares, or think I have none?
Know ye not I have lost my dearest Son?
But ye will when the Greeks storm, burn, and slay.—
Gods! may I not be here to see that day!"
Scoffs harsh at his last nine sons; each a goad
To prick them to equip him for the road:
"If Hector—God among Men—were too good
To last, how build hard with beams of rotten wood?"

Dumb the Sons hurried, loading they the van
With the Ransom, and yoked the mules; then ran
For the Chariot horses, though the team
Was yoked by Priam. The Queen, it might seem,
Between doubt and faith, fetched of choicest wine,
And begged the King to ask Heav'n for a sign:
"If Zeus send His Eagle on thy right hand,
Go thou to the Fleet; 'tis by His command!"
"Yea," replied the old man: "Gladly I pray;
He will pity, and bless me on my way!"
Priam prayed; his Divine Counsellor heard;
Lo! Black Hunter, surest foretelling bird,
Wings outspread—Perknos—o'er the City flew,
Witness of approval by Zeus true.
Cheered, they started. Idæus, of tried mind,
The Herald, drove the mules. Priam, behind,
The Car—and fast through Troy. Reaching the Plain,
Kin, friends, turned, courage lost; would not remain.

They quitted as a death-bed—slow to plight
Troth on Angel's visit, or Eagle's flight.
For a safeguard, summoning to His side
Hermes who loves mankind, Zeus bade him guide
The King on his perilous way. The God
Fastened his wondrous sandals, took his rod,
And, a Phthian, in graceful youth's first bloom,
Met the chariot halting by the tomb
Of Ilus.
Bound, as Priam said they were,
To his Prince, he offered to lead them there
Himself; while his Lord abjured the fight,
Had witnessed Hector's prowess with delight:
"Ev'n now, though, mangled, by the tents it lay,
Heaven had not suffered his Body to decay."

So the Youth mounted, and drove.
Night at fall
Whispered dangers; the God brushed aside all;
At the Greek fence, where feasting guards drank deep,
He shed upon their eyelids poppy sleep;
Gates opened; at the Phthian camp, without
Hindrance from the Captains who sat about,
He unbarred the Hall. Leaving Priam there,
Hermes, confessed, winged to the upper air.
In the gloom the Hero, nursing his pride
In lust for vengeance still unsatisfied;
When, lo! a form defenceless, old, and lone,
Yet ev'ry inch a King as on his Throne!
Sight sorrowful! on bent knees stiff with age,
Kissing the hands that in unappeased rage
Had crimsoned Ilium's meadows with a flood,
Drawn from the Suppliant's veins, royal blood!

It was as when upon some rustic town,
Drops, conscience-struck, a hunted outlaw down,
Fleeing to be shriven from the fresh guilt
Of a neighbour's blood in chance medley spilt.
Sudden the stillness seems to have giv'n way
To a gale big with ruin and dismay.
Outside they wondered when the storm would break
On the Stranger. At last the old man spake:
"Think, Achilles, of thy Sire, God-like King,
Old as am I, seated, deep pondering —
Envy beyond his borders, inside, strife—
How, on the desolating verge of life,
Hope to guard his kingdom within and out;
Then he remembers Thee, and mocks at doubt;
Dreams that each sail is bringing from the sea
Glad tidings of his hero son—of Thee!
Hopes day by day to hail his champion come
From Troy a victor to his Native home.
All hapless I, a father like to thine;
No band of sons equal in Troy to mine.
Where now? Of one after another 'reft,
Still I had Hector, best and bravest, left.
While I kept him, none had I lost; but Thou
Hast taken him; Priam is childless now!
Nought of him on earth but a poor bruised heap
Of bones!—
Oh! give, that o'er them I may weep!
In mercy take the Ransom that I bring!
Mercy on the torn corpse here mouldering!
Dread just Heav'n that hates a pitiless breast
Robbing unburied dead of rightful rest!
And as I pray, look you on my white hair;
Think 'tis your Father prays, and grant the pray'r!

Remorseless still? Did ever mortal dare
What I have dared? Ever lived one to bear
What I bear now? I, Priam, fawn upon,
And kiss the hand that slew my Son! my Son!"
He ceased:
Achilles saw his native land
Rise in a vision; his Sire on the strand
Waiting news from Troy—from his Son! Ah! No;
Save he was slain; gone to the Shades below!
A passion of tears seized him.
As he drew
Gently his young hand from the old, they two
Discoursed in strange concert griefs, diverse keys,
Harmonious still, strophes and antistrophes.
In the dust Priam for his Hector mourned;
And Achilles groan for each groan returned,
Now for friend he had let go to the grave,
Now for the Sire he might not live to save.
But ev'n the gust of grief, which through the tent
Had echoed, and beyond, at last was spent.
Achilles felt a wave of pity roll—
Grey head, brave heart—through his relenting soul:—
"Foes though we are, and yet must be," he cried:
"Let there be truce, and seat Thee by my side;
We will forget past sorrows if we may;
Sufficient the day's evil for the day.
Outside the Olympian Palace stand
Two casks ready to the Thunderer's hand;
Here, there, as chances, does He dip and throw
Ruin, or grandeur, happiness, or woe—
Which, need Immortals care?—sometimes a flood
Of misery, the whole, no spray of good;
Ah! for Fortune's scapegoat, branded from birth,

Helpless miscreant, wandering round earth!
Or Zeus plays at balancing lots; each hand
Dipping, throwing from where the two casks stand,
Thus has He used thy House and mine.
Fame told
Of thy wealth ere we came in sons and gold;
How, Lesbos to Phrygia, thy domain.
But the Pow'rs dealt Thee and Thy House a bane,
Continual war.
So, my Sire from birth
Was mighty and rich among kings of Earth.
Ev'n, an Immortal, Goddess of the Sea,
Was giv'n him for bride; but, unlike to Thee,
No band of sovereign sons for heirs; I, one,
Leave my Father, in Thessaly, alone,
Uncherished, while my few allotted years
I spend bringing trouble on Thee and tears,
But—for ceaseless laments bring no relief
To mourner, or mourned—stay awhile Thy grief.
I give thee Thy Son's body; 'tis the due
Of courage, iron thine, and heart as true.
Lives there a man of trials like to Thine,
Spirit so stout as to have pierced the line
Of the Greek host, and looked me in the face—
Me, slayer of the foremost of thy race!"
"Nay," sighed Priam: "Abase me I would, must.
While Hector lies, unburied, in the dust!
Take Ransom; grant the Body; let me go;
I would be alone with It, and my woe!"
Stern the rejoinder:
"Bargain not with me!
If I give, it is that I pity Thee,
And obey Heav'n; should'st Thou the Body take,

Imagine not I yield for Hector's sake.
Beware lest grief wake grief, and I lift hands
Against my Suppliant, and God's commands."
Priam kept silence; and Achilles bade
That the Dead should be washed, anointed, clad
In cloak and shroud, out of the old man's sight;
Watchful he that no spark should chance to light
Smouldering embers; then, he himself laid
The body on its bier, and knelt and prayed
Pardon of his Friend's Shade if now he gave
The Slayer's corpse the honours of a grave!
Finally, they supped—with high courtesy,
Royal each, in his equal's company,
Elder admiring the younger, in mien
A God; Achilles Priam's air serene
And gracious, with his converse bright as sage,
Reflecting a king's life, from youth to age.
No fear that his host, as they talked and ate,
Seeing a Ghost, might slay him where he sat;
As little doubt, when he had asked a truce
For Hector's funeral, that oath of Heav'n
Was not more binding than the pledge given:
"Bury Thy Son; so long there shall be peace!"

Next, to rest, and brave still; though Hermes broke
The tired old man's sleep, put, each in its yoke,
Horses and mules, and drove him through the night
And slumbering Camp, till they came in sight
Of swift Xanthus. There Hermes passed from view,
Leaving safe the company to pursue
Its wailing way along, with its Dead, won
By a hero's love for a hero son.

CANTO XXII

RETURN

Requiem

Counting minutes for her Sire's due return,
Cassandra climbed Pergamos with the Morn.
Far away—not prophecy this, but love—
She recognized her Father as he drove,
And "Him" on the bier;
Hark! truth, multiplied
By a soul, which flew with it far and wide:
"Lo! Hector! Ye have seen him oft in joy
Of conquering for her come back to Troy;
Hasten now all to hail him once again;
Never more will ye meet him on the Plain."
The City heard; at once as with a leap,
At Hector's name it started up from sleep;
Nor man, nor woman in the great town missed—
Its Hero at the Gate—to keep the tryst.
So, home he returned, with, for cavalcade,
A people weeping bitter tears, yet glad
In faith his Shade would hover o'er his tomb,
And even still prevail against Troy's doom.
Within the Hall of State the Body lay;
And the minstrels chanted their vaunting lay

Of triumphs by the Dead o'er the Greek foe.
But as music paused in its martial flow,
Women's voices would a last message send
To Husband and Father, to Son, to Friend:
"Dead!" moaned Andromache, clasping the loved head,
Warming the cold cheeks with the tears she shed;
"And Troy dead too, its manhood! Who defied
Achilles but thyself?—and Thou hast died!
As for us women—our lot without Thee?
What else but slavery across the sea?
And thy child's? to serve a hard lord, or die,
Hurled from a tower by some enemy,
One of many sore at deeds Thou hast done,
Who would avenge Thy might on baby son.
Ah! to feel the touch of a dying hand,
Treasure dying words to ponder in a strange land!"
"Dead! of my Sons the dearest!" and the cry—
A Mother's deepened into agony—
"Dead! why say more? Achilles in his ire
Mangled Thee, a tribute to his Friend's pyre.
Did thy scars stir therein one gasp of breath?
And now—for Gods loved Thee—that in Thy death
The flesh keeps almost its bloom, dew-soft, whole,
What have I of my Child but Body without Soul?"

"Dead!" sorrowed Helen: "And among you all
Who like me laments—longs more to recall?
Since Paris wiled me twenty years have passed—
Would I had then died! and from first to last
When have I not met hate from tongue or eyes?
I know all shudder at me, and despise—

All, but Thy Father, and Thou!
All would fear
To utter a harsh word when Thou wert near.
Grief for Thee is for Me; what hope to find
Living soul so gentle, chivalrous, kind!"

Nine days Mount Ida's forest, and the Plain
Rang with thud of axes, the creaking train
Of ox-wains timber-lad'n.
On the tenth morn
From the Palace, where it had lain, was borne
The Body; and with weeping, and with pride
In him, whom dead, as live, all glorified,
Set upon the pile, where Spirit might gain
Release from Flesh, a burden now and pain.
As the flame died, kinsmen with tears and groans
Gathered into a gold urn the white bones,
Placed it in a grave they had dug, and crowned
The whole with rocks, a monumental mound;
Then returned to Troy, to feast at the cost
Of Priam, fellow mourner, more than host.

FAREWELL!

So, our Farewell to Hector! and to Troy Farewell
"By Homer!" Hector gone, He had not heart to tell
How Achilles died—how Troy and King Priam fell!

THE ODYSSEY

THE ODYSSEY

Greeks in the youth of their literature, and of literary criticism, assumed the Iliad and the Odyssey to be by one Bard. The co-existence of two poetic imaginations, each extraordinary, would have seemed to them incredible. For differences in feeling, style, and workmanship, they had an obvious explanation. The Odyssey on its face was the creature of the Bard's age. An easy answer, at a later stage, was that no argument could be founded by one side or the other on the circumstances of either poem's composition. Except for vaguest tradition, merest legend, nothing was or is known of the authorship of the Iliad. For all that the world has ever been aware, unless for the impetus, the soaring, that itself may have been inspiration's final flight.

Had the unity of authorship been incontrovertible, the difficulties in dealing with the merits of the Odyssey would have been increased. The conception of the plot in each Epic is altogether dissimilar. For a large part of the Iliad Achilles sulks invisible. In spirit he always is actively present. Attention is concentrated on him and his moods. The idea of the poem is a series of perils

to be encountered. Room had to be kept for variety in the results. Curiosity must be strained almost to breaking point. Fancy and literary art were required, and needed economizing for success. Even indignation; for there are times when, in the blinding of the Cyclops, revenge is glorified into virtue. As a whole, the Odyssey is a triumph of romance and adventure. It was the proverbial infinity of resource in the Ithacan of the Iliad which recommended him for the second Epic's Hero. I am myself disposed to doubt if personally its minstrel admired him. Though he does his duty by him in the way of investing him with attractive circumstances, such as regrets for old comrades, at their annihilation whether by the half-dozen or shipfuls, how unlike the Bard's bearing towards the grief of Achilles for Patroclus. There it is whole devotion of a superior Self. Homer may have been blind. No blind minstrel is seen, and heard, singing the Iliad.

Freed from invidious comparisons, not from generous emulation, the Odyssey will be pronounced a noble poem, deserving well to stand by the Iliad's side. Compare it with poetical romances; none is its superior; which is its equal? Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" may, for some of the mackerel-hued contents, stand by its side, though not pretending to originality, or vying in sweetness of diction. Spenser's "Faerie Queene" is in theme nobler, and exceeds it in grandeur of thought, though far and away duller. Under whose, what names, in the same class has any country in ancient or modern Europe produced its equal? Then, in special features, boldness of touch, sweep, and swoop, when, in metre, were a storm, a horror, a butchery, by Læstrygon, Cyclops, Scylla, so almost cruelly painted? A brave

romance—and so matter-of-fact! A suspicion seems never to have occurred to the Bard that any apology could be expected for the quick succession of marvels, even an avowal that they were marvels; as of a power in Phæacian ships to dispense with helmsman and rudder, since "they knew the thoughts and minds of men, and the geography of Earth's cities and lands." Odysseus, not of a trustful character, accepts the claim as of course, and sleeps one whole voyage on its faith.

Concentration of interest is a special characteristic of the Iliad. The flood is directed to the glorifying of one supreme hero. Other poets have striven with the same aim. None, as in the Iliad, have realized their object. It is almost as if he of the Odyssey had made the contrary his ambition. As I have intimated, he does not always interest. The failure is not disastrous. In compensation multifariousness distinguishes the delightful entertainment; each fresh scene, if one now and then lags, is sure to be sufficiently relieved by another. For old readers and admirers there will always be, from each recommencement in studying the poem, another attraction. They will have been waiting for the re-entry of Nausicaa. Nausicaa may have raised up rivals for herself in dramas, masques, pastorals, occasional verse; but she has no superiors. The Odyssey, for a vast number of its admirers, though scintillating with flashes of genius, is, for the five books before her entrance, a mere ante-chamber where they await her appearance. The subsequent seventeen have been a period of such solace as they can find in the charm of her brief, and grave, maidenly farewell. I doubt if Helen on the Walls of Troy, the world's Queen of Beauty, presents so adorable

a figure as this Princess of the laundry, glad and glowing from her game of ball ; yet royal still !

To avoid some amount of repetition, I have omitted details of the journey of Telemachus to the Peloponnese, to collect news of his Father.

THE ODYSSEY

The Odyssey is a poetical narrative of the adventures of the king of the little island of Ithaca in his voyage home from conquered and burnt Troy. On his way he lost his ship and crew in a tempest raised by the Sun-God in wrath for their impious feast during the sleep of Odysseus on the God's pet cattle. Guiltless Odysseus was tossed on the Isle of Ogygia. The love of Calypso, which he did not return, detained him for seven years, until Athena obtained the resumption, on a raft he constructed, of his journey home. A tempest raised by Poseidon threw him on the Phæacian shore. There, as Athena had arranged, he was clothed, fed, and put in the way of introduction to the Court of the Kingdom by Nausicaa, child of its King and Queen. She was on the shore, mistress of a grand Palace-laundry expedition, ending in a game of ball. A charming idyll, which, but for Penelope, might have been a love scene. In due course, inclusive of a visit to the Royal Gardens of Alcinous, Odysseus wins the admiration of the entire Court, without joining in its sports, proves by the extraordinary cast of a rock his easy mastery in all, and, finally is won over by the King to reveal himself, and narrate the wonders of his travels.

THE PRISONER OF LOVE

A CAVE befitting a Goddess, where she
Who sat there had a right as such to be
By a fire of cedar Calypso plied,
Weaving wool, a gold shuttle at her side.
In a grove without housed birds sea and land;
Hallowed they, trained to obey her command.
A vine trellised the cave, and four bright jets
Nursed sparkling meadows of sweet violets.
Long she had loved Odysseus, fought despair,
Hoped at last she would be repaid her care,
Wondered how long patience like hers would spend
A ceaseless siege, and never reach an end.
Ev'n himself—love her; he should share her bliss;
Be her own—and Immortal with a kiss.
Alas! "Love!" Seven years he did but groan
All day, as she knew, wandering alone
On the rocks of the melancholy shore,
Longing to start for his own land once more.
Pallas long had sought to end the exile
Of Odysseus in Ogygia's isle.
Gods, Troy's friends, opposed; at length her chance
came;
And Zeus sent Hermes His will to proclaim.
The Nymph ached less Hermes was there to part
Her from her love than from an untouched heart.

Almost for herself it was a release,
As when the death peals for a soldier cease.
Him too. But for Poseidon's frown, or word,
Ithaca's rugged isle had hailed its lord;
And the bar to his return for past years,
Had been his fond Mistress's smiles and tears.

Content Odysseus. He was a freed slave.
Found it sufficient rest to hear the wave
Lapping, though for seventeen days he steered,
Till—sea-shadowed, Phæacia's hills appeared.
Then at once, lashed by winds south, north, east, west,
The waters tossed him wildly on their breast.
Poseidon wished him ill; for Troy in part;
Walls wrecked by him were dear to the God's heart;
Most, for a hurt, we shall hear, he had done,
Though in self-defence, rightful, to a son.

At last! among rushes, by the stream's edge,
Formless, almost speechless, he climbed a ledge.
Thence stumbled to a wood; there scooped a bed
Under olives, wild, tame, of leaves they'd shed.
The third day this on the sea, or beneath,
Of a wrestle Odysseus won with death.
He had despaired. Brave despair; yet fought still.
Death he feared not, if that had been Fate's will;
Though better, have been struck in battle down,
Heir, dead, of imperishable renown.
Than to have withered in Calypso's arms,
Unwilling victim of Immortal charms.

NAUSICAA

II, pp. 10–17.

Spacious Hypereia had been of old
Phæacian; but the Cyclopes hold
The borders; an insolent, warlike race,
Freebooters, wanting in all human grace.
Tired out at length, Phæacians agreed
With Nausithous, following his lead,
To settle down in Scheria, an isle,
Where Nature never will forget to smile.
When their king, grand builder, was called by Fate,
His son-in-law followed, as wise and great.
In a Palace chamber—for watch and ward,
Beside the door, two fair hand-maids on guard—
Slept Nausicaa, King's daughter, by birth,
In spirit and form from Heaven, not Earth.
To her, dreaming, appeared Athena, here
As child of brave Dymas, the Sleeper's peer,
Playmate; and the mandate she came to bring
Was just to be afoot with the sweet Spring:
"Up, Slugabed! a day to be astir
With the fresh dawn, and above all for her
Marriageable like you! Our young Chiefs sue,
A throng for your hand, their Princess's; you
Will be pledged; and the wedding-garments—where?

Bursting the presses—precious, rich, and fair;
But for wear? Impossible! Let us wend
Our way; though too far, with toil at the end,
A trudge for us and the maids. Rise, and pray
The King for mules to take us on our way."
No ally like Pallas; brings weal from woe,
And warns how near is high estate to low.
Trouble She disregards so She may mend
The tangled circumstances of a friend.

Nausicaa sought her Parents; a loom
The Queen plied—thread of Tyre; the Council-room
Called the King; but both granted the request,
Though cause of urgency -suppressed—was guessed.
So—the day still young—a glad start was made,
The dream-girl, be sure, in the cavalcade—
The Princess laid the whip on. Where the flood
Breaks into deep pools, clear, and free from mud,
They halt, unharnessing the team, to rove
In search of the wild, thick grass that mules love.
The wagon was unladen, and the whole
Company washed, and scrubbed, with heart and soul;
Working until nothing remained there more
Than to spread to dry on the pebbly shore.
Next, they bathed, oil not wanting, giv'n to use
By Queen Arete in a golden cruse;
Then dined, wine in plenty, and dainty fare;
For 'twas a rich folk, with no call to spare.
The meal done, music, when the echoes rang
To the air that the Mistress, leading, sang.
Nor this the end; for Pallas not content

Without seeing that Odysseus should be sent
Under guidance to the King's presence, moved
The Princess to a pastime the girls loved.
She flung a ball. All else forgot, but, though
Wain and mules were ready, yet to and fro
Swayed the game. As when Artemis among
Her sylvan nymphs, a beauteous, tall throng,
More fair she, head taller, on Tayagete,
Or Erymanth, shall rouse sulky boar, fleet
Stag, to Latona's pride; such as surveyed
By her Mother, might now have been the Maid.
Nausicaa threw, with such force, the ball,
As to miss the handmaid, who let it fall
Into a deep pool; and thereat a shout
That woke Odysseus; forth he came in doubt.
Women were these who fled as he came near;
And well might they view that he seemed with fear—
Clad in nought but leafage, bedaubed with grime,
Eyes lion's, blazing, ravening for crime.
Only, the Princess, nerved by Pallas, stood;
Brave too, a King's daughter she, by her blood.
Much he revolved—approach—clasp by the knee?
Nay, a young maiden—what if she should flee?
Best, accost as Royal: "Save Delos, where—
Phœbus' gift—Nature is immune from care,
A young palm tree saw I such perfect form.
Least now if ever, wreck battered by storm,
Dare I approach. Yest'reen, since last I set
Look on land was the twentieth. Nor yet
May my ills be over. How hope a Queen
Will see man in me such as I have been?
But Thee first of thy people I address;
Give me some rags to hide my nakedness!

In return be thine a home where each heart,
Wife's, and husband's, shall have an equal part.
Nothing so precious can the Gods bestow
As entire agreement between the two."
"We judge not," the reply, "by accidents of ill,
Zeus distributes Fortune at His own will,
All have to bear; they must; and thou wilt find,
As trained to endure, Phæacians kind.
No suppliant is ever left in want
Of clothes, or whatever we else can grant."
Meanwhile, as the pair talked, prepared for flight
Quaked the handmaids; for he was a dour sight.
Their Lady rebuked them: "Stop! Whence alarm?
Heaven loves us; whence mortals that would harm?
Know ye not we Phæacians abide
Apart at the limit of the sea-tide.
None hostile venture here; just some poor stray
That Zeus pities, would help upon his way.
Choose a sheltered pool; be he bathed, and clad."
Modest, as one of gentle blood he bade
The maids stand back; meanwhile Athena brought
Arts Divine to heal hurts that storms had wrought,
At her breath, taller, statelier to view,
He shewed; and She caused his head to renew
Hyacinthine locks, as Vulcan will fold
Sheeny silver in crust of ruddy gold.
A new Being released from the waves' weight.
Nausicaa, gazing, to herself, cried:
Happy woman whom such woos for his bride!
"Quick," the Princess cried: "spread ye meat and drink!
Then Home; to learn what may my Parents think."
But with pity; a meal without delay

Fought rude hunger stored for many a day ;
Then, before the start the Princess gave out
To the Guest—in thought much as words—his route.
For such part of the course as lay along
Open fields and paths, let him stay among
The handmaids, by the wain's side, as She drove.
She tells how find the Palace, and, " aware
Of my Parents' nature, I bid you dare
Clasp the Queen's knees, and, desolate on Earth,
Sue for compassion from a Monarch's hearth."
So, She ruled to leave him when on each side
The road skirted a port where fleets might ride.
On a grand scale this ; and too beyond aught,
Friendly rivals, nature and human thought,
The King's garden,
good acres four the ground,
A fence encompassing the space around.
Of each sort ! pomegranates, figs, apples, pears,
Olives, with produce ripe throughout whole years.
No failure there, as in a common clime ;
One bows, as in natural course, to time,
But so long as put forth fruit-buds it can,
Crops it produces for the use of man.
Germs that the west wind fondled into bloom,
The same warms into flavour and perfume.
A vineyard obeys a like rule ; one side,
Sloping, is gradually being dried ;
Elsewhere men still are gathering ; ev'n tread ;
Again, there are clusters, just turning red.
Throughout the enclosure same zeal to spare
Not toil, or wise thought, for a clod ; or care.
The Guest marked the whole ; ev'n how from below
Springs had been coaxed as fountain-heads to flow ;

One watering a legion, trees and seeds;
Another for as endless Palace needs.
The whole, a marvel to him—due to laws—
Nature and men—working as in one cause!
But by this time he was "within the court
Of the Palace. Silence was of import."
Had been hinted: "the people had no love
Of strangers; deemed ill motives urged to rove.
Themselves! to be ev'rywhere; aboard, swift
As bird or arrow, was Poseidon's gift."
Heaven saved against risk; It shed a dim
Twilight around the Guest, unknown to him.
Then he recalls, from the Princess erewhile,
A warning—plain enough to woman's guile—
"'Twould best—though Alcinous reigned—betide
To win first the Queen to be on his side."

THE UNKNOWN GUEST

Alone he had reached a recess unseen,
Wherein stood the Thrones of the King and Queen.
He clasped Arete's knees; as in a cloud.
All saw, heard, as a stranger prayed aloud:
"Behold, great Queen, thy suppliant! hear. Thou,
And the King! These also, to whom I bow,
Guests at thy Royal board!
May the Gods give
Happiness on Earth, long as ye shall live,
And to leave house and goods, each to his heirs,
That boons fallen to you may still be theirs.
I pray for you, your homes; pity! return
Me to mine, to dear ones, whom long I mourn!"
Ceasing, he abased himself to the ground
In the hearth's dust, and silence fell around.
Old Echeneus broke it to recall
The King as to his duty, most of all,
Of welcoming strangers within his gate
Before inquiry into wants and state.
Alcinous accepted the rebuke.
A gracious host, at once he rose, and took
The suppliant by the hands, with kind words
Pledging aid when to-morrow met the lords.

He feared mistrust:
"Nay," cried the King: "not so;
Thou mightest be our son-in-law; but go,
As such thy desire is. And now to sleep.
A new barque shall bear thee across the Deep."
The Elders summoned voted the request
Of the Sovereign—who backed it with a feast
For one nameless on whom Pallas bestowed
Majesty of a King, if not a God.
A galley was launched, and blood largely shed
Of Victims, whereon the courtiers fed.
Blind Demodocus was Bard; while he sang
The Stranger caught the theme as the strings rang.
'Twas his debate with Achilles. He wept
Behind his hood. Alcinous who kept
Watch on him, noting some nerve jarred, proclaims
The banquet's end, and to begin the Games.
In Hall supreme, outside Odysseus held
Eyes still; but young men tire to be excelled
In public regard by one strange to sport;
For that seems life to members of a Court.
Euryalus, Laodamas—a son
Of the King—concerted to work upon
Their belief he was a merchant whose art
Was but to carry goods from mart to mart;
A man of peace, with sturdy limbs enough
For oars and sails, not war, or play as rough.
Stern retort: "In no mood for pastimes he;
For nothing but his home beyond the sea.
He allowed no rudeness but from a host—
Laodamas was licensed—might taunt, boast.
Pretty lads—Euryalus—his like—ware!
Provoke me? See what I can do; then dare!"

With the word, and a leap, he whirled and threw
O'er the quoit-ground a rock; it whizzed and flew
Beyond all the marks for extremest cast:
"This," he cried, "sport of one chained to a mast!"
Euryalus, astonished, as the rest,
Asked pardon of the taunt he had addressed,
Offering—requital for a sharp word—
In its scabbard, a silver-hilted sword.
The Stranger graciously received the grant;
Hoped the Giver might never feel its want;
War-worn, wave-buffeted, poor wreckage, thrown
Naked, on a strange shore, nameless, unknown,
Was recognized as kingly;
more than all,
He won a priceless heart beyond recall,
Hearing 'twas the eve of his voyage home,
In the great hall waited for him to come
Nausicaa; bade him in his far land
Remember she raised him from a strange strand.
The supper was served; and a herald led
Demodocus where the Bard leaned his head
Against a tall pillar. Of the fat chine,
The Hero's portion, part of a huge swine,
Odysseus sent the Bard most; prayed he should
Take for his theme th' Achæan Horse of Wood;
And the Bard told who planned, manned it, in such
wise
Sang that slow tears dropped from one hearer's eyes.
Almost 'twas as if he, turned Trojan, saw—
Dying for his home—his wife with bare, raw
Shoulders, being, at the spear's sharp point, broke,
Before his face, to endure a slave's yoke.
Alcinous, none else—for he sat near—

Had marked how, spite of self, tear fell on tear.
Courteously he bade the Minstrel lay
His harp aside; and "would not their Guest say—
For no less than 'Brother' the name he bore—
His fortune's course, fair, rough, from shore to shore?
Above all, Troy? decreed by Gods and Fate
Subject for song—wert Thou associate
With its sorrows by marriage, friendship good
And fond a tie as any one of blood?
Needs must we know thine, or thy country's name;
Else, where carry Thee—how back to the same?
Our ships have no pilots or helms, but ken
Without speech the thoughts and the minds of men.
Darkness, clouds alarm not our sailors; they
Have lost, they boast, no craft by night or day,
Spite of Poseidon's rumoured threat, in sight
Of the Town, sink a ship; thus prove His might."
A hush—King, and Twelve Princes, held their breath;
The whole Hall throughout was as still as death.
Perhaps, Nausicaa listened apart
Where none could guess the throbbings of her heart.

In command of twelve ships, besides his own, gathered from among the Achæan Fleet, Odysseus had sailed homewards. A first disaster arose from the strong wines of Ismarus, which caused him a loss of six seamen from each vessel. He stayed awhile at Lotus-land, striving against its lulling slumbers. Again, a delay on the outskirts of Cyclopland. They had seen a high building with its inhabitant, a giant. On him he decided to pay a visit with twelve companions and a goatskin of the strongest wine. At nightfall a hideous giant, Polyphemus, would drive his flock into the great barn, which he closed with a rock beyond human strength to dislodge. Two of the seamen, eight in all, he devoured, while the rest shuddering gazed. Odysseus, known to him as "Noman," decided to blind him, after intoxicating with the strong Ismarus wine. The ghastly vengeance is worked on the monster. Escaped, the hero and his crew spent a month with Æolus, King of the Winds. On their regretted departure, with all contrary winds imprisoned in a bladder, the sailors in the belief that it held treasure, cut it open, and, from being within sight of their own fields, were hustled back to the Isle of Æolus, who refused harbourage. A visit to the Læstrygons in their cannibal citadel, was a horror, whence the one ship of Odysseus found itself:

> "On the Isle Ææa, where dwells
> Fair-haired Circe, mistress renowned of spells."

WINE OF ISMARUS

The Lotus-Eaters

Polypheme

IX. v. 24.

Thus adjured, the Guest answered: "Thou would'st know
My story? 'Tis a tale of endless woe.
Where shall I begin? In this Hall has one
Not heard of Odysseus? deeds he has done?
And how Troy fell? Sailing homeward I moored
Off Ismarus; might with rich spoil on board
Have sailed safe away, had there not been wine
The Town's; without the Priests' at the Divine
Grove, whom and whose for its fragrance rare
And his gold treasure, I agreed to spare.
Thirteen Greek galleys were in my own charge;
I signalled for sea; crews, dispersed at large,
Had to pay for their cups a bloody cost,
And sail with six comrades out of each lost.
Next, storms from Zeus nine days; and Lotus-land.
Its people are no murder-plotting band;
Simply they offer sweet flowers, sweet fruit.
No more. But accept, and henceforward mute
Guests lay, forgetting home and hope; task hard

To force them weeping, with forlorn regard,
Under the benches bound; leaving behind
A hushed, stilled atmosphere, sighs its sole wind;
Where the joy is just to be unaware
Of pain, and agony to feel a care.
On an isle we heard from the other shore
Voices; but at dawn I bade twelve ships moor
Afar, while it sufficed for mine to dare
Make trial of what sort the natives were.
Rowing we saw a cave, roof laurel-spread.
Beside, slept sheep and goats. About its head
A hall, raised high of stones, dug from a pit,
With tall pines and oaks, joists to bind and fit.
In the shade dozed among the dozing sheep
A monster and most ruffianly in sleep;
Superhuman—peak measuring with none,
Dwarfing proud heights—this Brute Thing dwelt alone.
At sight I bade the rest, beaching the boat,
Keep it ready, to have at once afloat.
Of meat I took such as I had aboard,
With Priest Maron's wine, strongest he had stored,
For what need might arise, an ample skin;
Then, with twelve chosen men, I entered in.
First, we explored the Cave, though in such fright
Were my comrades as to have taken flight
Forthwith—with such spoil—whether made or live—
As we could bear to our ship, or drive.
I forbade; hoping gifts, fair words at least;
Soon to repent, when in rolled the grim beast,
With on its back, supper fuel, a weight
Which he tumbled down by the open gate.
Stunned, for I shared the terror at the din,
We all rushed to the cave's last limits in.

Parting his flocks, he left the males outside
The Hall, barring by a rock for door-slide—
Scarce twenty-two teams would stir—then each lamb,
Or kid, set for suckling by its own dam.
Dairying done, he leisure had to mark
The fugitives there huddled in the dark.
In answer to his questions I had sought
To awe him by stating that we had wrought
Troy's fall; though adding craftily a tale
That our spoils had been shipwrecked in a gale.
My warning that Zeus will avenge a guest
Brought but a scoff, and a cannibal feast.
With a rush upon my comrades, he seized two
Puppy-wise, dashing brains out at a blow;
Rending limbs lion-like; rage without soul,
Swallowing raiment, blood, entrails, bones, whole.
For us what but cry to Zeus, and to weep
With vain despair as he lay in dull sleep?
Revenge? Stab—we might cut the vital cord;
Cut a stone-block—sever that by a sword?
So, sooner or later, prisoned inside
That black dungeon, to have pined and have died.
Night, and no counsel; till, for his morn's meat,
Two more crushed, one th'other, for him to eat.
Day; wrath then stirred wits. He went. An olive-wood
Pole he dried for a club; and there it stood
Parching by the fold, I chose, and cut off
All but a fathom. That I thought enough,
And sharpened. Back he; but—new mode at eve—
He did not on this one special night leave
The males without. He drove them to the cave,
Gloating on the dire meal he longed to have;

Then lifting the great rock, ingress to bar,
As if it the merest shore pebble were,
He milked, and brought ewes their young in due course
As tenderly as women their babes nurse.
Next, to his cannibal feast; two live, raw
Mass, human flesh, sacrificed to his maw.
I offered a full goblet, a long draught,
From the Ismarus goat-skin we had brought,
Praying him in return to let us go.
Fast he quaffed, craving more, pledging, if so,
A return. Three times I brimmed the vast cup,
Which three times greedily did he drink up.
He asked my name. 'No-man,' said I; and he:
"For thanks I'll eat thee last of the company.
On his back the foul glutton fell, supine,
Slumberous, subdued by the potent wine.
Our stroke was arranged; four men held the pole
Kept hot in embers; point like a live coal,
All but aflame; and dressed he for his rack.
See! the coarse, thick throat bent helplessly back;
The eye, furiously glaring, though glazed,
At the four Greeks poising stick that half blazed.
Ah! and a hissing! it is in! Halloo!
I from above turn it to, turn it fro!
The blood the point thirsts for boils, bubbles, steams,
Round eyeball's roots crackling! Ah! and the screams
As he plucked the stick forth! Churlish though he,
Hearers of shrieks forced from his agony,
Gathered from their highlands at the weird sound
To the cave of the Hall, and stood around:
"Ail you?" They, "by fraud, or by arms of Man?"
He: "Noman." They: "What use scolding God's plan?

None can shun a disease that Zeus may send,
Pray to thy Sire Poseidon; He might mend."
Thus left he groped; took away the big stone,
Sitting there to catch who else would have gone.
Fool to hold me such; and this my design;
The rams, lodged by a happy freak within,
I had at night, stilly, with a rough thread—
Osiers he used to collect for his bed—
Fastened three abreast, the one on each side
To share the load, the centre's, in the ride.
For myself I chose King Ram, that came, slow,
Last, it pleased Cyclops to think, for his woe:
"Could'st but track me Noman! To crush his bones!
Listen as spluttered his brains on the stones!"
His retort was a huge rock, that all but
Would, descending upon our ship, have cut
Her in twain; whereat with a bitter taunt,
I gave name, parentage, by way of vaunt.
He employed the news to pray; if willed Fate
I should return, it might be lone and late!
For himself, while he deemed us in his reach,
Casting, in vain, a whole cliff from the beach.

KING ÆOLUS

Læstrygonia

Circe

V, pp. 31–5.

With oars, starting at dawn, we reached the land
Over which King Æolus holds command.
Lord of Air, he orders thence each wind
To rage, or be still, as he is inclined.
It floats at his will, though with me his guest,
For my convenience it stayed at rest.
A whole month, as right welcome, there we spent;
If longer, Æolus had been content.
He liked to hear of Troy, th' Achæan fleet,
Questioning till he had the tale complete.
When I would proceed, and inquired my way,
He took friendly care that I should not stray;
Rebuffed, six long days, nights, we sailed and rowed.
Period of memories dyed in blood.
Can I evoke one with no single trait
Recalling a gallant flash to repay.
A brutish world this at its bounds, where dwell
The Læstrygons in their steep citadel
Of Lamos, who rate strangers as chance meat,
Windfalls for savages to kill and eat.

Under impulse Divine, my one ship found
Herself in a harbour, as thither bound.
It was on the Isle Ææa, where dwells
Fair-haired Circe, mistress renowned of spells.
Æetes' sister, Perse's and the Sun's birth,
Grandchildren of Ocean that circles Earth.
I speak of things we learned, not that we knew.
For ourselves life was but a draught of rue.
In the forest or beyond smoke arose;
It was agreed let half, as the lot chose,
Start first thither; it Eurylochus led
My brother-in-law, whom my sister wed,
Starting first, a strange tale his; in the wood
A Palace—for watch-dogs, wolves and lions stood.
So well trained the beasts, as our sailors came,
They gambolled gaily round—they were so tame!
A Lady the while within her own room
Sang, doing work immortal at her loom.
But our men were not rudely made to wait.
They shouted, and Herself was in the gate,
Praying their entrance. All, even "discreet"
Polites the trap caught set for their feet.
Thus much Eurylochus saw. Of the rest
Part from inarticulate cries he guessed,
Adding details later; as, that with meal,
Cheese, honey, and wine She mixed drugs to steal
Human semblance away, turn men to swine,
Yet so as to recollect, and repine.
A patchwork story, whence I could but tell
That Greeks, my Greeks, the sport were of a spell
Played them by a "Goddess," "Witch," what you will,
Rumoured to do wandering seamen ill.

The suspicion roused in me rage extreme
Beyond deeds of cannibals, Polypheme.
I snatched sword, bow; bade Eurylochus guide,
When, weeping, he lagged, suffered him to bide.
So, alone, I went; had climbed a wild crest,
When Hermes stayed me on, else, a mad quest,
Unless for the herb "moly" that He gave;
All potent, as He pledged Himself, to save;—
For I, as armed, I reached the gate, and cried,
Was courteously brought at once inside,
Richly regaled, throned on a silver chair,
Then hustled with: "To the stys, and lie there!"
I rushed, sword drawn, nor would relent, till when
She had restored my comrades to be men.
Thenceforth She dealt nobly by me and mine;
Supplied dishes of all sorts, honeyed wine,
Purple coverlets, gold and silver plate, hot
Baths causing toil and grief to be forgot,
Service by Nymphs of grove and fountain, elves
Guessing wants not e'en felt by our own selves.

HADES

VI, pp. 36–41.

A WHOLE year gone at last; in idlesse spent;
And my ship's company in discontent
Reminded me—I, Circe—that we, come
From Troy, should not thus loiter far from home.
Circe held me not back; only, first bade
Sail to Hades; there consult the shade
Of Tiresias, Prophet old and blind,
Who—Persephone's boon—kept a whole mind.
Such pilgrimage—bare thought—plunged me in tears;
The crew obeyed me; did not hide its fears.
My Goddess inspired a north-wind; that bore
Us to the River Ocean. On its shore
Dwell the Cimmerians; nor cheerful morn,
Nor serene sunset know they, but forlorn
Haunt life's one night. Then to old Ocean's bank
Returning I dug with my sword a tank,
That blood there from the sheep I slew—a pair –
Might remind those drinking whose ghosts they were.
Sorrow, first of all, to have to refuse
Access to a draught Elpenor, my crew's
Youngest. Heavy with wine, he slept, to taste
The cool, on the high Palace roof. In haste,
At the loud call aboard, he fell beneath,

Forgetting the ladder, and met his death.
The next to be barred, my own Mother dear,
Approached, but gave precedence to the seer
Tiresias, who at my pray'r unrolled
All my coming life to its latest fold.
Eventful it will be, as it has been;
But just an accident in Time's long scene.
Time rests upon Hades, ascends, descends;
Ever, in its ages, starts thence, there ends.
Persephone had published, that Below
Passed One could tell whence sprang they who ruled
Now.
Whispers, a hurricane, stirred Pluto's realm,
Threat'ning but for the tank to overwhelm.
A vision of fair women; Gods, and knights;
Tyro, Alcmena, Clymene; delights,
And griefs as strange; sieges of Heaven; Love
Fraternal, that, unless 'twere blessed Above,
Could not joy, and Hate neither heart could feel
Eased till the other bled to deadly steel!
But I tire you. Time too for me to sleep;
For I must to-morrow be on the Deep."
Silence; a charm had fallen upon all;
The rapture of the Tale possessed the Hall.
Arete pointed, broke it not:
"My Guest
He was, is yours become, and of your best
Is worthy!"
So all, chief the King, agreed:
"The night is young; speak of thyself; each deed,
Stratagem, resource, suffering, and care;
Thy comrades at Troy, how they fared, or fare."
None the Hero to scorn for deeds he told

Good hearers, nor boons from the rich in gold.
Storms had sunk Troy's spoil; home would be repaid
By Phæacia in the gifts she made.
So, he resumed:
Regarding it as just
The boon to some untimely gone to dust,
Queen Persephone of Her grace now brought
Warriors by whose side myself had fought;
Agamemnon, first. His lamenting Ghost
Narrated how he, Captain of the Host,
Was slain as an ox in the shambles; life
Foully stol'n by an adulterous Wife.
Alas! how comfort! could not even say
If Orestes saw still the light of day.
"Your wife chaste," he granted. "But ware wives' lies!
Mine troubled not to close my dying eyes!"
Sad we parted.
Achilles, Ajax, son
Of Oïleus, Patroclus, followed on,
With Antilochus; "Ah! wonder that took
Them!" Cried they! "What would not Odysseus brook,
Rather than resign his will? Yet, what led,
Alive, below among impotent dead?"
"Shadows these!" replied I: "Dead as alive,
They obey what laws may Achilles give!"
"Words"—the retort: "Death can be nought but death;
Hero and Glory—weigh they more than breath?
Goddess-born! a mere phrase—that like the rest—
'Mother!' who ne'er clasped the dead to her breast!
Oh! could I but tread earth beneath my feet,

Be nipped by the frost, and scorched by the heat,
To feel blood red and real course in each vein,
Joy with joy, true joy, ache with pain true pain
Be a hireling, just feel a sun to shine,
Lout to basest of churls, wait upon swine,
Not rout ghost-hosts of Troy, ghost-helm on head,
While I forget I've lived, know I am dead."
"But of me who am here enough! My Son,
Neoptolemus—where? what has he done?"
"Never behind lingered he, the mere boy";
Answered I: "Always in front against Troy.
While others in the 'Horse' urged long delay,
He would have burst forth while it still was day."
No more Æacides grieved; the long stride
That bore him away attested his pride.
My heart had an ache could not thus be eased;
Vain my hopes; Ajax would not be appeased.
Next to Achilles, none in arms could boast
Equal prowess with his in the Greek host.
But the "Horse of Wood" won through me the Town;
No one deed exceeded it in renown.
O that the Arms had perished before they
Dimmed the lustre of many a great day!
I grieve to have left pursuit too soon off,
Not to have pressed it doggedly enough.

Still curious I, save for Trojan jeer:
"An instant, and mark! Gorgo will be here!"
Hasting back in dread, I bade loose, and row.
Rapid oars, and the river Ocean's flow
Tossed us to the sea. By night we were borne
To Ææa. On its beach we slept till morn.

On waking our first duty was to send—
Discharging a last one—for a dead friend;
To fell trees for a pyre, moist with warm tears—
More—friends fewer—for each that disappears—
To burn the dead and arms, and raise a tomb,
With a column, and name saying for whom.
Gods and men have done me ill; and as well
Of kindnesses from both have I to tell.
Circe feasted us on meat and rich wine
Till the sunset; then by foresight Divine
Revealed to me apart how all might come,
Unless through some misdeed, back to our home.
At morn our voyage began, and the sails
Filled; for the Goddess gave favouring gales.
Meantime I warned, as at their oars they sate,
How they might baffle death, and even Fate.
It was as She said; first, the Sirens' Isle
We reached; and the wind fell. Then, fear of guile,
The men furled sail, and took oar. I with wax,
That sun and my hands soon served to relax,
Closed their ears; in their turn they bound me fast,
Upright with many strong ropes, to the mast.
As, ears closed, the crew rowed, on a green isle
They saw Nymphs singing; with, by them, a pile,
As of bones. On these I spent not a glance;
Only on a loveliness to entrance,
Allied to all the ecstasy of song—
Theme, Earth's mystery when the world was young,
To Ilium's fall, how, through whom it came—
"For we are here to sound Odysseus fame!"
I ordered, and I prayed to loose my hands;
The crew added tighter and tighter bands.

So, one death was escaped; but not prepared
Had I for the next traps; I had not dared.
Charybdis, Scylla are partners; a stroke
By one shattered nerves; and a second broke.
See, first, steam; one billow then, and a roar,
At which, in a wild panic, every oar
Flew splashing. True, men believed in my words;
And, when I conjured them, obeyed their lord—
Though who would not quake at portent like this,
A tide gorged, disgorged, up, down an abyss
Nought earth-born could face save wild fig that hangs
O'er Charybdis's den, and plays with her fangs.
And what use in speeding oars till betwixt
Her jaws, and Scylla's six necks, on each fixt
A head's three rows of teeth grinning in each;
On each—one a mouth—man quivering, and a screech.
Fool I to hope such monsters would expose
Themselves to the vengeance of human foes!
Circe mocked the fancy; yet on the prow
I stood with two spears, as if farthest throw
Could have struck into the Cave. Ah! the pang,
Appeals, to myself with which the air rang!
Direct of all my trials on the Deep,
Such sights, and such sounds—how haunt they my sleep!
The horror still brooded; moved me to shun,
Though bright and green, the Island of the Sun.
Tiresias and Circe had combined
To bid us sailing leave this spot behind
On pain of a sentence without recall
To the worst of evils that could befall.
Eurylochus resisted: "Nerves like mine
Were steel; there was no toil they would decline.
Besides, ill winds, south west, began at night.

Let them sup and sleep; then sail by morn's light.
Our Lord feared for the Sun-God's herds and flocks:
They'd swear to hold sacred each sheep and ox."
Past midnight a stiff wind, a tempest blew,
And for a full month, from the south. The crew
Had used up Circe's gift, and what chance food,
Fish and birds, hooks supplied from flood and wood.
I grieved at the hunger, and sore at heart,
Had wandered where'er I could be apart.
Washing my hands clean, I had made my vows,
And the Gods shed sweet sleep over my brows.
Alas! my comrades, who had kept their troth
Erewhile, abused my doze to break their oath,
Vowing once home in Ithaca to raise
A rich Temple to the God. When I woke,
I smelt in the hot fat our doom. In vain I took
Heav'n to attest my innocence. The Sun
At once had claimed revenge; if given none,
Had threatened Olympus to stay beneath,
And to illuminate the fields of death.
Six days of revel; and then lulled the gale;
On the next we began once more to sail;
Myself in hope against knowledge—the meat
And skin would moan and creep as the men eat.
We'd lost sight of land when lo! a dark cloud
Above a dark sea; and, straight, screamed aloud
The west-wind, a hurricane that pell-mell
Swept cordage into the hold, and down fell
The mast. It smote the helmsman on the head,
And he plunged as a diver leaps, but dead.
Then a sulphurous bolt was by Zeus hurled.
It shook the crew out on the waves, and curled
The galley up. Keel, sides parted. A thong,

I caught, tied mast, keel; we floated along.
Ah! terror! I felt I was being borne
Gulf-wards! But blest fig! Not thence to be torn!
I climbed, waiting my turn to keep my way;
And reached Ogygia on the tenth day.
But you know how I with Calypso fared.
Let audience and teller both be spared.

ITHACA AT LAST

P. 46.

Silence—as if all waited for next word;
Or sleeper from dream that has softly stirred.
At last the party broke up, to return
After brief slumbers with fresh gifts next morn.
Then with more feasting, applause, and regret,
The Hero was left aboard at sunset.
Tired out he lay, mute, fearless, wise, and slept.
Hawk-swift, purple wave behind, the boat leapt,
And reached the haven—as Lucifer rose—
Named from Phorcys, where a fleet might repose.
Close-by, in a pleasant, shadowy cave,
Where the Naiads weave their bright robes, and lave,
The crew, without disturbing, placed the Guest
On the sand to complete his tranquil rest;
Stored his treasure within; and hastened home.
Waking he knew not whither he was come—
Even wroth, as if to an unknown land—
Might be, and betrayed to a robber band.
Examined first his goods, and found none lost;
Though still deemed the region a foreign coast.

Readers, you know he is home, at that stage
In his long and eventful pilgrimage.

Homer—neither—e'er tires ; rendered has gone
Beyond the course that I had meant to run.
Resort to the Bard's self, Friends, if you ask
How Troy's Captor fulfilled his whole hard task.

And now at last on his own unrecognized isle in the charge of the ever faithful and amused Athena. The Goddess explains to him the usurpation of his home and goods by a number of suitors of his wife, whom Penelope repulses, though doubtful of her husband's survival. For safety from their greedy and unscrupulous ferocity, Athena disguises him as a ragged, low beggar. Eumæus, the swineherd, faithful to his memory, is hospitable, when Telemachus enters the cottage, straight off his search for rumours of his Father at the Courts of Nestor and Menelaus. Unknowingly he had escaped a ship set to wreck his by murderous Suitors. Telemachus sends Eumæus to Penelope with tidings of his safe arrival, leaving the unrecognized Beggar restored by the Goddess as his miracle of a now recognized Father, to concert war to the death against the kitchen pirates. The recognition of Odysseus by the Dog Argos is as pathetic as is the overthrow of the street beggar, Irus, comic, and the massacre of the ignoble fortune hunters, even Amphinous, a feast of blood! The minstrelsy of the Epic winds up with the manifest intention of the Singer to save material for a future Homeric Cyclick, if not Himself!

HESIOD

HESIOD

c. B.C. 850, OR 735

A TRANSLATOR'S difficulty in approaching the Iliad is a happy sense of impossibility. He desires that his version shall impress this upon readers as has been a result of the attempt upon himself. The first effect of rendering into English verse specimens of Hesiod is discouragement. A translator's natural hope is to earn the gratitude of a public, however small, by widening its circle of poets. The promise of this from the Bard of Ascra is meagre. According to his own confident testimony the Muses had introduced themselves to him feeding his flock on Mount Helicon. By their favour he had been crowned victor at a poetic contest in Eubœa. In gratitude he dedicated to them the prize, a tripod. An honest simplicity forbids him to try to show his best fruit and flowers on the surface. His wisdom is apt to be ponderous. I have often felt as if I ought to apologize for truisms.

Early literature, if not descriptive of war or adventures, is addicted to moralities in the form of apophthegms. Hesiod had a particular incentive to their use in the conduct of a younger brother, Perses, who, being at once idle, with an extravagant wife, and litigious, persecuted him

with suits before venal judges. Being a farmer on a soil not exuberantly grateful, his imagination sought relief in a most elaborate system of superstitions. Let me give a few samples: "Put not the ladle across the bowl," that is, lest the superior resent the intrusion. "Leave not a house in building unfinished," lest a crow alight on it, and croak. Alas, for the terrorism of days! Sometimes a day is a stepmother, less often a mother! How few know that certain days are good, as for "broaching a cask!" Not that a thinker's wisdom occasionally does not flash forth: "Lay by little on little; quickly it will become much"; "Trust a woman on account of her fine dress? trust a cheat!" "Is not Potter jealous of Potter?" "Starve, or dig"; and—when the Muses

> Taught me to sing the inexpressible song!

his hearers were such babes as

> Not to know how much bigger is half than whole!

Hesiod won his place among poets by singing of the farm, and its life. He has proved his title almost as it were in defiance of his declared theme. A legend of a series of independent human generations may very possibly have been floating about the world before his time. At least he reduced it to words, and invested it with the melody of metre. Through him it has become an element of the world's literature. For the Ages since his own he is its author. When a poet, though it be Virgil himself, sings of the reign of Saturn, the Golden Age, we have to thank old Hesiod. It is the same with a collateral myth, the establishment, almost voluntary, of Chronus—Saturn of the Italians—once Imperial—

in the pastoral exile of the Happy Isles. At all events, Hesiod caught it from the air during his term of inspiration, and wound it into his web. Pindar, so far as we know, found it there, and ennobled it.

Somehow the texture, loose and incohesive, of Hesiod's argument, lent itself to the inclusion among his verse, by no wish on his part, of much by no other known authors. Thus the "Theogony," the "Shield of Hercules," and a picture of a Bœotian winter have been assigned to him. But a much more extravagant misappropriation is a jest at Olympian Zeus Himself. That, however, as I found it, in quiet unblushing possession, I have not disturbed. The incursion is too comic for me to interfere with quiet board and lodging by Perses's pious brother for the romping, rampant cuckoo idyll of Pandora!

WORKS AND DAYS

Aid, Muses, who in Pieria dwell,
Daughters of Zeus, His ministers to tell
Whom He has chosen—His sole will—to raise
From the dust, or abase for their proud ways.
From you I learn how long before the birth
Of Us who now labour upon the Earth,
It pleased the Olympian Gods to mould
Men, a race beautiful, as if of gold.
Their lot—God Chronus then reigned—was to stare,
As at a play, scenes shifting, without care,
In Nature's course. No threat of age by rude
Hints in hands and feet of decrepitude.
Existence one long festival; work done.
When pleasure in "breathing" the muscles gone;
Harvests sure, just as springtide might portend,
By favour of a God less lord than friend.
If still mortal they, yet in that soft wise
Came death as when sleep closes weary eyes!
Nor is Being for them, when in the grave,
At an end. Spirits of this Earth they have
The high duty under Heaven to guard
Earth's limits of right and wrong, to reward,
And to chastise, as Kings; as of that race,
Reading hearts; invisible, ranging space.

To succeed the Golden, a second birth
Is called "Silver," to suggest lower worth.
As from hope "mothering" might manhood bring,
And good sense be learned at the apron-string,
Infancy was a century. So great
The want still of self-restraint that the rate
Of violent deaths fast consumed the whole
By homicide, nor left a living soul.
In self-reproach for bad workmanship, Zeus,
King now, blessed them dead, finding elsewhere their excuse.

With this proof that no long pupilage can
Assure wisdom, peace, to His creature man,
Zeus for His next experiment used brass.
Brass seemed their limbs, and adamant to pass
Into their souls; brass housed them; for their meat
They killed beasts; barley fed not them, or wheat.
Of stout ash their tools, but with none outside
To challenge spears, inglorious they died.
Each, a "Terror," exchanged the sun's gay light,
Slain by a brother "Terror," for death's night.

Unsatisfied, not hopeless, Zeus again
Set to work creating. From His own brain
And heart, mixed with Earth's matter, Heroes sprang,
Oft held "Demigods." With their deeds air rang.
Zeus made, then left to follow their own bent,
As is His wont, and suiting Fate's intent.
Of kindred blood Thebes' soil drank. Helen's flight
Accounted for offshoots of Hero might.
Yet died they not all. Zeus gave life and rest
At Earth's bounds, in the Islands of the Blest.
There, beside Ocean's deep eddying pools
In the realm Chronus, once Chief Sovereign, rules,

They dwell care-free, unless that the year's soil
Shall bear them its three harvests without toil!
A serene future theirs, and in the past
Peace from the base mould in which ours was cast.
Alas! for poor Us of the Iron Age,
Strife ceaseless, yet nought of heroic rage;
No household love, reverence of the old,
Faith in oaths none, all justice to be sold.
Envy rampant, to virtue no good will;
Nay, laud of riot, practice of all ill.
Where can Purity, Nemesis alight
Without a slur upon their robes of white?
Pity me condemned for no fault of mine,
Hopeless of release much as I may pine.
What my quavers against an eagle's claws
And his fierce rush to glut his eaglet's maws!
Madness to nurse the fancy that a song
Can avail against passions of the Strong.
Yet even in an Age of Iron blind
Abettors of wrong and violence find
Justice tracks perjury, and will chastise
Both suitors and Judges who deal in lies.
See! when a City loves the true and just,
Treats as offence to her a breach of trust,
She and hers abide in peace; Zeus holds war
From her borders; fire, famine keep afar.
Her mountains are crowned with tall oaks that give
Mast to her swine, and hollows where bees hive.
She needs not tempt sea's wild storms; her own land
Bears her enough at Nature's glad command.
Tremble, citizens, on whom Zeus hurls down
Bolts shared with lords who have provoked His frown.
Quake, above all, ye on the Judgment seat,

Who dare to trample right beneath your feet.
Souls, their bodies turned to clay, at the word—
Roused from sweet sleep—of their Creator, Lord,
Return, invisible, to haunt Earth's Courts,
And offer Divine Justice their reports.
They number thirty thousand; to and fro,
Avengers of friendless and wronged, they go
Straight up to Justice, where, upon her throne.
By her Sire's, She judges wrongs as her own.
Courts of Law are Temples; Zeus there presides.
Venal judgments profane them; and besides
Encourage lawless strife by crooked ways,
With a corrupting lure of idle days,
To shun fair rivalry, life's honest rage,
Righteous instinct of the Iron Age—
"Potter against Potter"—For Heaven's plan
Is to point out no short cuts for rude man
To his nature's limits; just let each limb
Stretch as high as such has been framed to climb.
'Tis thus with other beasts, might thus have gone
With Man had only he been let alone.
Lacking fire, he would still have cropped the ground,
Gathered such bush and tree fruits as he found.
Mines would not have been sunk, or vessels built
To cross the seas, or blood in fight been spilt.
Zeus, who used fire for His thunderbolts hid
It until meddlesome Prometheus slid
A spark inside a hollow stalk, and drove
Zeus to punish Man for the Titan's love.
With a bitter jest that the plot to lift
Man from the dust would prove a costly gift
Hephæstus by His orders from mud wrought
A virgin as Goddess fair. Pallas taught

Delicate embroideries. The rare part
Set Aphrodité was Her own fine art,
How to shed an atmosphere, as if fain
Perforce to yield to desire that was pain.
Last, Zeus charged Hermes: "Let her think no ill
Of playing a dog if "twill serve her will!"
Obeyed, even bettered. A shy, young maid
Goddesses, a whole troop, took and arrayed.
Her skin the Graces with Persuasion vied
To contrast—ivory and gold; they tied,
In vain, locks overflowing, while the Hours
Crowned her with wreaths of ever fresh spring flow'rs;
And Pallas, if scorning, valuing them,
Pointed charms, each, with a blossom, a gem.
Hermes had already breathed life, and speech,
Interpreting the soul, to overreach.
Zeus, wroth with Prometheus, the girl designed
For Epimetheus's bride. In this mind
He asked the Gods for a trousseau, His plan
For Earth's trust in Titans to punish Man.
In a like jealous mood each God a pest
Gave as a wedding present from "the Blest,"
And, thus endowed, Pandora—thence her name—
To the brother of wise Prometheus came.
Enraptured he took the Maid; not the Chest;
Minding late the caution: "Ware gifts from 'the Blest!'"
Alas, curious womanhood! Soon out
From the box cares first, then a rabble rout,
Though struck dumb by Zeus, that by day and night
Roam sea, land, unseen, though themselves with sight.
When Zeus as yet was friends with men, the soil
Spontaneously fed us without toil.

Afflictions might befall; at least a sore
Fear cast not its grim shadow long before.
Well for Man Heaven's self now pity felt,
While in the chest's rim one comforter dwelt.
Zeus stayed His toy from shaking it loose; nay,
Closed the lid, yet so that forth stole a ray!
Fields may ring iron to the spade; above
Frown lead skies; in brothers' breasts be no love;
Poets may harp, find none to give ear; past
And present alike stretch dead, and a waste;—
When—hearts warm, gloom parts, we no longer grope;
Nature ev'n Man, are transfigured!
Hail, sunny Hope!

PINDAR

PINDAR

PINDAR is a meteor in the sphere of poetry. Each Ode is a comet. Habitually he soars, and sets literature remote and misty problems. The contemptuousness he is eager to display exceeds the haughtiness of Æschylus. Such always, he was, while he sang, on hire, at the disposal of riches without regard to the source; of usurpers of power, however unscrupulous and oppressive. Every Ode glorifies the buyer as a hero for his wealth; for having reared the swiftest steeds, or exhibited the best trained gymnastic abilities. Rapture at the martyrdom of patriotism nowhere is manifest; much at splendour. If I read any motive for an universal resentment, it is indignation at a lot in life under patronage which he abhors, scorns, and cannot escape.

The result, a mighty fancy's struggle with prosaic tasks, is singing in a ceaseless rage. Whatever the possible demerits of his own customer, his honest contempt for hypocrites will have found abundant matter outside. A Hellenic public throughout the States of Greece, appreciated his temper. As keenly did it, we may be sure, admire the poet's learning in Greek legendary lore. It could interpret allusions, and supply clues. I have no perplexity in understanding the glory of Greeks in the Odes one and all. In trying to explain the

delight of Moderns I am more at a loss. Tenderness seems to me completely absent, together with melancholy, gaiety, humility, even sweetness—whatever for ordinary, commonplace thoughtfulness and feeling, renders poetry a necessity. At the same time I must admit that if other qualities can make up for the want, Pindar was endowed with some fine substitutes. He holds a high course, seldom, or never, declining, and often rising to sublimity. He despises envy, jealousy, meanness of any sort; and labours to clothe the unimaginable grandly. I have been at pains to select for my examples two poems which, at all events in the original, represent worthily the wide sweep, even the audacity of his vision.

Did ever poet but he take for his avowed theme as in *Olymp. II*, the dignity, the righteousness of money—claim it for a direct avenue to renown in mortal life, again, and again, renewed? Nor for human rewards alone, but a pledge of eternal bliss? He hurls his thunderbolt of an Ode at the jealous bards—perhaps even Simonides and Bacchylides—who envied him his successful Muse; sneered at him as venal, bribed to laud a robber of his State's freedom! Not that he cared. Honestly for him wealth was a force, a gift of Heaven, crowning the will to do the Gods' work on Earth, and be paid by repose in the Happy Isles. As he chants, he is not bard alone, but Priest and Prophet!

Then, the Fourth Pythian, commonly most admired of the whole of his work extant! It also is inscribed to a Greek sovereign, who had retained him to sing his Chariot's victory. Not ethical as is "The Tyrant of Agrigentum's Ode," it is a sort of miniature epic. As the War of Troy, the tale or legend of the Argo's voyage

represented the temper from which the Hellenic tribes grew into a nation. The Fourth Pythian is the monumental basis of the story. Pindar was entitled to assume that his countrymen could understand allusions and supply a key. That justifies abruptness. Take it thus, and the multiplicity, flashes, flow, of the narrative are wonderful. Characters are dropped upon the stage; a boy heir, Jason, a model of self-command, calm tenacity, a cold lover; astute schemers, Pelias, Æetes—and at once they live! Pindar in his eagle's flight leaves all kinds of difficulties behind him; and they have explained themselves away. Even the touch of feeling, generally wanting in the Odes, is added here by the final pleading, equally sagacious by way of counsel to the King of Cyrene, and affectionate to an exiled friend.

Nevertheless, I must confess to perplexity still at the unqualified, modern, literary admiration of the Theban Eagle

THE PARADISE OF WEALTH.

Olymp. II, vv. 53–100.

Insolent wealth—a curse! The wealth that I know is a good;
Flower-bed of virtues and sweetness that draw from it their food;
Ground-work of cloth, embroidered with tissue of silk and gold,
Arraying men worthy to trace back to heroes of old.
Riches to these are a source in which they occasion find
To lift desert from the mire, to all be generous, kind;
To lavish as eager thought upon the relief of care
As hunter beating cover whence he hopes to start a hare.
'Tis a star, the lode-star of Truth that guides unto the goal
Whoever seeks for wisdom, and the means to "make his soul."
Let him learn, and remember, he will be arraigned Beneath,
And return here to serve the doom fixed by the Courts of Death.
By their works are all men known; and what are the works of these
Who use whatever was giv'n, to indulge their lusts and ease?

Justice weighs that they received against the sums
they have spent;
And, toil by day and by night, they cannot pay what
was lent!
Galley-slaves on a chain, though each lives and labours
alone,
Ugly years without joy, since each had but thought of
his own.
Regard now the doom of the rich who are good; 'tis
not theirs
To spend the bloom of their vigour on dull and common-
place cares;
Waste their vigour at the oar, harass the soil with the
plough;
Earn a livelihood barely, and by the sweat of the
brow;
No; like exiles escaped, from the land of shadows they
come,
Astonished awhile, perplexed, to that which still is their
home,
To take up the life they had left just one stage further
on,
And sequel resume of work that but for death they
had done;—
Shamed at nothing on Earth or in Hades, unless to
deny
A petition for alms; and shrinking from nought but
a lie!
Thus living a life the well beloved of Heaven must
live—
No tear called to shed—for Heaven has no sin to forgive—
Passed the trials—thrice of living, thrice of dying—when
each

Stage proves itself powerless to stain ; has nought more
to teach—
Quitting the portals of Darkness, the Elect feel their
feet
Pacing in light and in wonder the marble of the street
Paved by Zeus o'er sea, earth, and air for the Souls of
the Blest
To reach Saturn's Court, hold high festivals there, and
there rest.
In eddies of whisp'ring music round the Happy Isles
breathe
Ocean's daughters welcome, while chaplets and armlets
they wreathe
To adorn the King's guests ; for waters and woods are
aflame
With blossoms of ev'ry texture, hue, form, fragrance,
and name,
Stooping their heads to the waves, swinging aloft in
the breeze
Playing mid the foliage of multitudinous trees ;—
And all of pure gold ; for nothing may less precious
be seen
About halls where abides the Ancient of Days with his
Queen.
Here, Destiny's work for them fully accomplished,
and well,
The Chiefs of the nations in peace and in harmony dwell;
Cadmus, Thebes-maker, and Princes—Dragon's teeth—
that she bred ;
Peleus, hero and king, august, friend of Gods, Goddess-
wed,
Joying in his son, whom a Mother's, a Wife's, tears and
sighs

Had melted the heart of Zeus to lift into Paradise.
—And many besides, of whom legend and minstrelsy tell,
Feast now as brethren and friends in Saturn's fair citadel;—
Like, unlike; all having felt wrong, and perhaps, done, again;
But all having borne themselves manly, and Kings been of Men!
For none enter without leave of the Keeper of the Keys,
Rhadamanthus, interpreter sworn of Saturn's decrees,
From his bench in the Isles assaying the quick and the dead.
Thus the sainted Spirits themselves, as Jove's pathway they tread,
Know not their bliss until the flowers and Heavenly strains
Proclaim them freed for ever from life's penalties and pains!
Yet, while Soul, though predestined it be, is wrapped fast and deep
In cerements of gross clay, and still has its grave-clothes to keep,
Heaven in earnest of its grace has bestowed on some eyes
Skill to decipher the text of holiest mysteries.
Here and there the fire falls upon a bard—even on Me—
To see Life casting a shadow of Immortality!
My quiver has its arrows for minds that will understand:
And a touch by them shows, as from a peak, the Promised Land.
Words that to boasters of learning are a mere idle tale,

For sitters at wise men's feet are withdrawal of a veil.
Critics are crows that dare with blustering chatter molest
An eagle in his flight doing mighty Zeus's behest.
Strung the bow; but the mark? Inspiration waits to be told
At what to aim the shafts of brainwork as supple as bold.
Agrigentum? that is the City; and him that I deem
Agrigentum's noblest I choose, best of all for my theme.
Trust a bard's insight, when by the Nine Muses he swears
That no Greek town has known in the space of a hundred years
Theron's match in yearnings to rush to the help of a friend,
In hands op'n to spread, as others to grasp, wealth without end!
Well that extravagant praise brings an imposture to shame;
But babble and spite will throw their mud on a true man's fame.
Come; I count my Theron's good works; take up, doubters, your stand
On the shore; set against each a single grain of sea sand.
I wager, you tire of the game long, good people, before
The close of my tale of bounties forces me to give o'er!

THE SHIP "ARGO"

IV. Pythia.

Arcesilas, Cyrene's King,
Victor on Pytho's Course, I sing.
He is my theme; noble in deeds and blood!
And where could Hellas with more right
Anticipate thoughts, acts, both wise and good
Than in source from Argo's crew? I delight
To tell our Age of the stock whence Battiads came,
And know that, if call were, their ways would be the same.

Tortuous Argo's voyage back
Homewards: but thought can mark the track.
I hear a mighty City's loud acclaim
Welcoming home a victor King
In Cyrene's, mingled with Argo's, name,
And hymns that they at Delphi sing.
For, amid high fortunes, Cyrene, thou hast seen,
Without Argo, forget not, thou wouldst not have been!

The galley, lengthening its route—
To baffle Colchian pursuit,
Of it and Medea reached the Red Sea.
Balking the foe, its oarsmen bore

The ship by land, as cunningly
Medea bade, to Afric's shore.—
As they prepared, reaching the Tritonian Lake
To relaunch, One, in human guise, of stately make,

Offered, as to the newly come,
Hospitalities of his home.
With breath in their nostrils of their own land,
They could not stay: but he still bent
They should not part without gift from his hand,
As Euphemus, the Pilot, leant
From the prow, thrust in his palm the nearest beach clod;
Knowing the gift's worth, being in truth a Sea God.

Zeus, as He saw the largess pass,
Thundered approval; but alas!
The clod, neglected by those to whose care
It had piously been consigned,
Was tumbled in a corner anywhere,
And soaked by brine, hustled by wind,
Till the germ of Libya's Imperial State
Was content to be island Lemnos, and to wait.

Medea, Queen, Sage, Prophetess,
Magician—born in turn to bless,
Curse, Great Heuses—on the Libyan Coast
Saw the clod giv'n, and what was willed,
Being hard by at Thera when 'twas lost,
Felt its purpose must be fulfilled.
Hear things sad and glad, told the Ship's crew by the Queen
Predicting good fortune to right ill that had been:

"The Giver deemed our Pilot, son
Of the same father, would steer on
For his home at Tænarus, and there throw
His present in the waves that beat
Above the entrance to the World Below—
First link in chain Time must complete.
Not for Him of the Lake Tritonis to suspect
That Euphemus would, with a Lemnos Bride, elect

A foreign domicile, first there,
Then—or his stock—in Thera; where
A chieftain of the House, in long descent
From him, should finally obey
Apollo's own warnings and clear intent,
And gathering an armed array
To befit the hero ancestry whence he springs,
Found cities in Libya, and a line of Kings."

Silence. Her voice—the music!—ceased.
But tongues were not thereby released
To talk of common life.
Though this strange She
Lighted but by a partial ray
That dark immensity, Futurity,
Each mused: "In some fresh gleam of day,
Might not his stem be seen in like flowers to break?"
And hugged a dumb trance between hope and fear to wake.

Tangled tales Argo's, Jason's, are;
And scarce shall I reshape them square.
Step-brother Pelias tricked Æson down
But Delphi had drawn over all

The lurid sheen of the Iolcic crown,
After its way, a death-black pall;
"When comes to sunny Iolcus with one foot bare
A highlander, stranger, or citizen, Beware!"

And so it was that when this lust,
In Pelias of Kingship thrust
Gentle Æson from his due, there was born
A son to him, bewailed as dead,
But for safety sent by night, babe forlorn,
To Centaur Chiron to be bred.
Grown to manhood, one midday in the market-place
Of Iolcus 'twas He stood—How doubt! of Royal race.

Half-shod, shoe lost, the mountaineer—
Marked such by daggers, underwear
Close-fitting, pard-skin against prickly hail—
Recked as little as that a tide
Of gold, his locks, like rays on coat of mail,
Rustled down; and, as upon his hill-side,
A lone wilderness, he, nerve-proof, silent, gazed there;
Sensible of nought but that he was a King's Heir!

None guessed whence he; all stood at gaze
Of their homeless sovereign.
One says:
"Surely not Mars from Aphrodité's bed?
Or Apollo from Delos come?
Otus, Ephialtes, great Chiefs, are dead;
And too Tityus met his doom
From Artemis, whose unerring quiver taught force
Not to trespass on loves outside its measured course."

Chatter rambles round; guilt leaps straight
To conclusions, confesses Fate.
His swift mules hurried Pelias along
To the market-place, where, apart,
Stood One, single-sandalled, beyond the throng.
Death hissed at the usurper's heart
But the "King" asked, from what last Giant-womb of Earth—
Though he quaked to hear—the tall Youth derived his birth.

Frank and courteous the reply,
Though unknown the Questioner:
"I
'Jason,' Chiron's name for me, from his cave
Come—sent thither a new-born Thing.
It was my parents' stratagem to save
A life that troubled the new King.
Chiron's daughters reared the child to be good and pure;
He trained the boy in manly arts, and to endure.

But when I had attained full age,
He bade me claim my heritage."
Pelias was mute.
At Jason's request,
Some showed him his home. There 'tis told
Were joy-tears, and a five days' and nights' feast—
Strong heads had they in times of old!—
With, on the sixth, a full hearing of Jason's cause,
Received with far and near lineage's applause.

He might have measured strength, and vain
Had been his uncle's claim to reign.
But Jason was Chiron's pupil; his right
Was sacred; yet away armed strife!
He came: Pelias, believe, to unite.
Fate frowns when heirs share by the knife.
Though for all fraud, to which craft tempts, vengeance waits stored,
Let common blood keep peace, and not unsheathe the sword!

Alike from Cretheus we descend;
And Powers of Heaven forfend
That with spears and javelins we divide
Goods our ancestors' treasure yields!
Nay, freely I leave to thee on thy side,
Sheep, herds of yellow oxen, fields.
I mind not that thy House has prospered by our ill;
It may keep thriving on its spoil with my good will!

"But the sovereign Sceptre, the Throne
Whereon Crethreids ruled, alone,
A horse-taming People, by grant Divine,
They are my right. On their release
All contention ends between mine and thine;
If not, never will there be peace!"
Pelias preparing for every event
Made answer apt for what might sound, not be, assent.

"It is no joy for me to reign;
Take Throne and Sceptre. I resign.
But I owe a duty, as a King, first,
And Thou too one before a Crown.

The bloom of youth begins in Thee to burst;
In me life's flame is dying down.
Now see how thy main object I would reconcile
With a wondrous dream that visited me erewhile.

Phrixus bade me convoy the Fleece,
The ram's that saved him, back to Greece;
Hoping for his own self, discharged from guard
Of this wonder, distressful post,
And, relieved of his long watch and ward
Among barbarians, poor Ghost,
Freedom to join the disembodied Shades Below,
Or, if not Hades, to range Hellas to and fro.

Counsel I asked at Delphi: Clear,
Peremptory, the mandate there,
'To send a ship for Fleece and Soul.'
Prove Thou
Kingship by success; and I call
Zeus, Tutelar of our race, to attest my vow
To give up Throne and Royal Hall."—
Well assured he that the famed Skin was fenced by charms
Unconquerable by array of human arms!

Judging by self, he dropped from view
The task's terrors. But Jason knew;
And they inflamed his passion. As the head
Of a chief State, potent his claim
To call, and, as one race, Achæans lead.
So forth went Heralds in his name,
Inviting fifty Heroes, Champions of all Greece,
To ship on Argo, and win back the Golden Fleece!

The Prince's cry met quick reply
From offspring that to Zeus most high
Were by Leda, Alcmene sparkling-eyed—
Castor, Pollux, Hercules—born;
Warriors all three in pitched battle tried;
Seed of God, to be Gods in turn,
With whom two brave Chiefs came, of the Earth-Shaker's race,
A flush at sense of worth and prowess in each face.

Pilot Euphemus, and, great lord,
Periclymenus, came on board
From Tænarus and Pylus; and, that sweet
Should share in such high deeds with strong,
Phœbus sent his delegate, as was meet,
Orpheus, the renowned Sire of song.
For when Gods lodged on Earth, and Music still was young,
It was of the doers when acts were to be sung.

Hermes, God of the Golden Wand,
When his Twins asked to join the band,
Prepared them for the hardships. At the tale
Echion, Eurytus waxed hot;
Manly blood shouted in their veins, "To sail!"
Their father rejoiced.
From the grot
Pangæan, Zetes and Calaïs were sped forth,
Men, though with wings pricking, by the glad King-Wind of the North.

Such as these made the Argo's crew—
Gods', Men's, blood mixed, whence Heroes grew.
Meanwhile Hera set in every breast
A fire of craving for the deep;
Contempt and loathing of a sluggard's rest
On mother's lap in sodden sleep;
Thirst to exact the uttermost for a last breath—
Valour's elixir—a friend's life bought by a death!

When had Admiral the bliss
To command a company like this!
Jason gloried passing it in review.
Seer Mopsus read omens kind
And fair in birds' flight, and embarked the crew
With good-anticipating mind.
So, all hands heaved, and hung the anchors on the prow,
Waiting for the Captain to give the word to row.

On the stern Jason took his stand,
A golden goblet in his hand,
And prayed Zeus, Sire of the Olympian Gods,
Who hurls a thunderbolt for spear,
Ocean as well, with—night and day—its roads,
And rushing Winds and Waves, to hear:
"Grant gracious days to speed us on our outward track,
And intercede with Fate to smooth our passage back!"

As from the cup he poured the wine,
Purpling bubbles, upon the brine,
The clouds that formed to let out lightning broke,
A jet of rays, like April rain;

And Heaven in thunder its answer spoke;
Whereat hearts that stood beat again,
Palms at the Seer's bidding leaped upon their oars,
And, insatiably twirling, left behind the shores.

South breezes favoured; by their grace
They neared the Axeine. There a race
Of tumultuous, seething waters blocks
Transit of galleys through the strait.
The while a pair of wild eddying rocks
Till then had lain in constant wait.
Jason knew, and moored, he had the wise thought to found
A shrine to Poseidon, and sanctified the ground.

Heroes' prayers move the Sea King.
He accepted their offering,
A bull—from a red herd, its lord unknown,
That grazed, lawlessly free, the shore—
For sacrifice on a hewn altar stone;
Then, madding with thirst for men's gore
The half-sentient rock monsters—blind with that lust—
Drove them into grinding each other into dust!

Lo! the Phasis! can Colchis hold
Against Argo the Fleece of Gold!
But, brave Chief and comrades, there lie between
Worse odds than on a battlefield,
Subtle counsellors, wizards, who have been
Taught spells that baffle spear and shield,
Fifty Greek champions may rout a black Colchic host;
Little cares its King; not so will his spoil be lost!

Child of the Sun's Charioteer,
Æetes had lived long in fear
That the heir of the Æolids from Greece
Would lay claim, as by right of blood
Of Phrixus, to regain the Golden Fleece.
He had been shown by Day's wise God
How, when force was unequal, judgment, wiles, and charms
Might be trusted to cure defects in right and arms.

He was safe else; were there a doubt,
His Medea would stamp it out.
Prime enchantress she in all Asian land;
Relied-on beyond his own brain
By her father; in all he took in hand
His hope when all besides was vain:
"Mere guardian he of the Fleece; Jason's friendly host;
Would yield, as Pelias, to a champion of the trust."

Blessing be on the Queen of Love!
Floating from her Paphian Grove,
She brought, now first on Earth, tied on its wheel
Among her sharpest darts of fire,
The speckled wryneck, that, shak'n, will unseal
The frantic torrent of Desire.
Medea, Jason, at the Palace met as foes;
A bird whirled, and between them passion bloomed, a rose!

Inspired by Aphrodite, he
Effaced, as with a sponge, all she
Had felt of pride in country, reverence
For parents, instinct to disguise

A maid's raptures, drowned in a longing sense
Of Hellas seen in Grecian eyes.
Her heart was Jason's; and it compelled her to let
Him learn the key to each magic task her Sire set.

Cunning salves she compounded, such
As fierce furnaces could not touch;
And more else she contrived, and did, and told,
That here it needs not to rehearse,
Since 'tis by the issue itself unrolled,
And a crime to waste precious verse.
Enough that a Queenly Bride for a Hero won
The thing he had staked his honour and life upon.

Futile that Æetes, in view
Of the astonished Argo's crew,
Dragged, and stationed, an adamantine plough
In the front of a fallow field,
Then, yoking oxen, drove straight furrows through,
A fathom's depth; nor failed to yield
Prompt obedience the flame-breathing team, though none
Aided the Monarch, and he worked the glebe alone.

How could he know that Love had won
The battle ere it was begun?
While it flattered his cunning to provoke
A rival certain to be scorned,
Jason with a prayer had doffed his cloak,
And drawn the share to loam unturned.
Necks bent to the yoke, though ribs quivered 'neath the goad:—
And see! borne without a stumble the fated load!

Hail! victory beyond belief
As to his line returned the Chief,
How hand clasped hand, and crowns of grass were twined,
To him more precious than of gold,
And words burst from the heart tender and kind!
For, though the tale was but half told,
A spirit like his was not one to be gainsaid,
Nor his Argo's an enterprise that could be stayed.

Æetes played his part; too proud
To show surprise as Jason ploughed,
Gaily welcomed him to the Fleece, when fetched
From a snake a ship's breadth and length,
Where, in the reptile's jaws, it lay outstretched:
"Light work that to the Ploughman's strength!"
Brave taunt this, although not so bold as meant to sound.
Already he felt he stood on no solid ground.

He clung, even the Dragon slain,
To the boast of his realm and reign;
In the strife shunning no foul play, a game
That, to spilling a brother's blood,
Medea joyed to frustrate by the same,
Weighing not means if bad or good;
Slave she of passions as hot as the brain was chill
That hired itself to school and serve an iron will.

In Arcesilas we acclaim:
Argo re-lives—all—in his fame!
But, City, laud Apollo too, who thrice
Warned his heir from a lesser thing;

Bade covet, and it only, a pearl beyond price ;
As Fate's hand, be Cyrene's King.
When did other clod defy storms to overwhelm,
And, tossed on its native beach, grow City and Realm !

So, what seemlier for the Shrine
That willed the crowning of his line,
Than to grant the eighth Prince prime place and grace
In the bloom of his rosy Spring,
Victor in the great Amphictrion Race,
With Me—so the Muse would—to sing
How the Ship, his forefather's, with Love's aid to Greece,
Redeemed the homeless Ghost of Phrixus, and the Fleece !

Fortunate is his lot whom Fate
Has decreed ruler of his State,
When wisdom is his, and the City's Chief
Is skilled to be its Healer too ;
Has a touch that is balm for all forms of grief.
Arcesilas, that gift use Thou.
The God of Healing's self is standing by thy side ;
May He breathe calm on troubled waters—be thy Guide !

The task is hard. Weakness breeds wrong ;
None set it right who are not strong.
But blest Cyrene of the Golden Throne,
That seated on it is a Lord
Whom the Sister Graces have made their own,
Teaching kind acts, the winning word,
To be as far as one man's vision may extend,
Law's champion, an honest foe, a generous friend.

O King, and, dearer title, Friend!
Muses as their messengers send
Bards; for messages to the wise consigned
Mean acts well done; and what so well
Prepared a conduit pipe as a Bard's mind!
Hear Me then, while I frankly tell
How Thou might'st fortify a rule that I approve.
And restore his country to an Exile I love.

Rough experiences of youth
Have taught Demophilus plain truth.
Though late, he strips tinsel rhetoric bare,
That, dressing spite in fancy phrase,
Caught h'm—staring up—in an open snare.
Escaped, and from an all-fools' maze,
He wonders he could ever have been led astray
By chimeras from duties lying on his way.

No Cyrene Citizen, born,
Bred, endowed as he, lacks his turn
To influence the fortunes of his State.
He admits that it came; and went;
For Opportunity will never wait;
Leaves no opening to repent.
Misery to know that in his own blindfold quest
Of a chance the worst, he has thrown away the best.

Thus, seen the idleness at last
Of wrestling with schemes vague and vast,
Feebler Atlas, he has long craved to change
Ideal dreams for work of hand;

Within his far, loved Cyrenæan range,
On—modest bounds—his father's land,
Stretched beside Apollo's Fountain, to feast and sing,
His lyre's notes blending with the murmurs of the Spring.

Pity, and recall. Saturn's Son
Showed mercy when the War was done,
Granting the rebel Titans their release.
Demophilus is no such foe.
Now that the youthful turbulences cease,
Bid thy wrath's gusts no longer blow.
He'll take up time from ere wild germs began to breed;
Asking of life but what staid Townsmen claim to lead.

Not to thy heart alone appeal
I for a Minstrel, to unseal
A King's fount of mercy, to let it flow
Fully and freely where it will;
But for Cyrene too—Many waste now
In thinking, if not working, ill
Against Thee on foreign soil, whose valour and word
Might avail thy Realm in Arms, or at Council-Board.

And riddles Thou canst read: Among
Encircling boughs, a bending throng,
An oak may reign for Ages, bearing fruit.
Shorn of its branches, it will live
Just for so long as it shall chance to suit
Men's caprice for it to survive.
The site wanted—itself for fuel—to be made
Slave, a roof's pillar—farewell, Monarch of the glade!

It takes trunk, branches, earth—all Three
In unison, to make a Tree.
The cruel loss, the suicidal fit,
Fellow Citizens, might and main—
Like wolves tearing each other in a pit—
Sword crossing sword, brain crossing brain,
Until Egypt, Persia, descend, a host, and sweep
The entire Pentapolis on a cinder heap.

At least, how could I not regret
To leave unpaid a Poet's debt
To a Poet, for having, when of late
My guest, struck on a theme of song
Divine, Heroes' deeds, mysteries of Fate,
That has borne Me on wings along?
Thy name, Arcesilas, shall live, if that, with Mine.
Then, remember who inspired Me the wreath to twine!

ÆSCHYLUS

ÆSCHYLUS

The property in Æschylus which particularly impresses me is his power of concentration on a single character; even on one point. All dramatists have for each play a character about whom the rest, persons and incidents, gather, or are supposed to gather. An author of a book desires to spread the interest. Indeed, characters themselves, whether in play or volume, have an instinct for refusing to be despotically absorbed. Æschylus in his "Prometheus" insisted upon it, and succeeds. From the first verse of the Play to the last, minds, emotions are, as spectacularly they could not help being, riveted on the agonized figure on the cliff's side. Not that this is all, even the chief marvel, of the piece. Ages, worlds, of manifold passion, conflict, past, future, present—unfathomable in themselves—change and interchange, whirl round the Deity undeified, suffering pain as men suffer pain; only that none human could survive this. He has insight into decrees of Fate which mighty Zeus covets to learn, though they might show Him consigned to be mocked by His captive Titans in Tartarus.

We might imagine that Æschylus had intended to diversify the interest by representing the Giver of Fire to Earth as a martyr for Humanity, a Redeemer of Man from the permanent status of mere head of the beasts

of the field that Zeus and himself found him. Such mediation is pictured only to fascinate us the more with Prometheus. The work he does, his conflicts with Olympus serve simply to explain the stupendous Being a Thinker has elaborated, created out of his own fancy, and his discontent with the State Theology of Hellas.

The "Agamemnon" exhibits the same absorption of the Poet in one of his characters. His subject was a grand one, the return of the Conqueror. It was wrenched out of his hands by the adultery of Clytæmnestra, and her revenge for the slaughter of Iphigenia. That, too, a sufficient theme for tragedy. But the Greek General in Chief brings in his train the Prophetess Cassandra. Thenceforward the Play is hers. Little cares writer, any more than reader or spectator, for the forced connexion of Captive and Conqueror, or for any, very unlikely, affection of hers for the slayer of her family. Two women occupy the stage; but for Æschylus really there is only one. When the Prophetess is gone, the curtain might as well drop!

If there could be anything beyond the utterness with which a vision seized on Æschylus when he ranged about for a ruling Idea, it must have been at the birth in his brain of the Hymn of the Eumenides. The play is properly named after them. They make it; and the Hymn is they. How triumphantly the Three defend themselves —how grisly, hideous they remain. But by it, through it, the grip they keep on heart and brain! Is there anything in the entire range of dramatic literature its equal? I say "dramatic'; but the "Prometheus" is an Ode, and the "Agamemnon" a string of Odes.

Yet the pen which fetched the Furies from the Gates of Hell could describe a battle, that of Salamis, as vividly

as if a Napier were reporting from despatches written on the Field. We feel as we read that not an incident is related for which the Marathon soldier could not vouch the honour of his sword. Not the less, but the more, it is inspired poetry.

PERSIAN NARRATIVE OF BATTLE OF SALAMIS

Persai.

The Night was sped;
And Dawn arrayed in grey, and blue, and red,
Harnessed her milk-white fillies—
Then, while we
Looked, though against all likelihood, to see
The Hellenes' disappointment, as they tried
Our line—three hundred triremes, side by side,
Without a gap—and next scanned the array
For flags of truce, and Heralds on their way
To pray for mercy—suddenly a shout
Rang, loud, and musical as Pæan, out;
And echo, returned from the rocky shore
Of Salamis, swelled the chorus to a roar.
If startled we, how not? When men have fooled
Themselves like this, whose blood would not be cooled?
Greeks quaking? Preparations made to fly?
Nay, hailing Death, with Odes of victory!
But no pause left for us to scold our past;—
Scarce had the shout died down, when blared a blast,
Trumpets sounding onset, setting, as 'twere
On flame, Strait, and circumambient air.
Forthwith, at a word, Greek oars rose and fell

With regular stroke on the murmurous swell;
And the whole was seen of the puny fleet
Moving in battle line our own to meet!
For the attack, their right wing led the rest—
Strange with what nicety its ranks were dressed.—
Each, following, kept its due interval.—
A moment's hush; and then, as if a call
On Heav'n at once, and Greeks, we heard a cry,
Vast, multitudinous, appeal on high:
"O Sons of Hellas, will ye brook to see
Your native soil no longer yours and free,
The Shrines of your ancestral Gods, the Graves
Of your Sires defiled, your wives, daughters, slaves?
Your choice to stand or kneel!—Never again!
Show whether ye be driv'n cattle, or Men!"
Think not that, when they raised their battle-cry,
We failed to answer it, to do or die;
But the Fight was on; crashing, boats on boats;
Half our defiance expired in our throats!
Theirs to begin;—one, steering straight to break
A Sidon galley with his brazen beak,
Beat-in its tall curved poop; another sent
An Egyptian to the bottom with rent
Yawning right in the gilded prow;—and yet
Fortune was fairly ev'n while the fleets met
In the open. By degrees the attack
Pressed our medley of galleys back and back;
Until, far from neighbours assisting, each
Had to labour not with sharp prow to breach
Swaying comrade, or, lurching, by mere bulk
Sweep off a bench of oars, and leave a hulk.
They knew their work; prison the seething mass,
And chase wild stragglers who might strive to pass.

Fast the pinched surface of the deep was spread
With straggling keels upturned, and dyed blood red;
At eve the victor crews off Ajax-isle
Slew in the king's sight our noblest, now cheap and vile.
Such ships as beaks, Greek, Persian, failed to smite,
Flung hither, thither, in disordered flight,
Yet after risks many, much wandering,
Held out, to reach a port, and serve The King.
But alas! for the slain, though less for those
Whom Death in battle-shock saved from our foes,
Than for theirs who survived to swim the Strait,
And pray quarter from unquenchable hate.
Wild orgy there of massacre and gore!
As with a shoal of tunnies on the shore,
Or fish bursting the net, the victors hewed
And hacked their prey with splinters of drift-wood.
Wind and Ocean hushed, borrowing from Death
The wailing and moaning to be their voice and breath!
Pity us too! who watched the agony,
Till Night saw; drew within her sanctuary
A shattered salvage!—
Great Queen, I have done!
But if ten days were counted, one by one,
'Ere the horrors I viewed were all rehearsed,
The tale would crave more,—broke not this heart first!
Be sure no single day since the Sun's birth
Has seen like carnage revelling on Earth!

CASSANDRA AT THE GATE

Agam., vv. 1256–1330.

"THE Fire! The Fire! It lights on me again!
Mercy! Forgive! Off! Off! It scorches breast and brain!
Must I?
I must! Old men, ye deem I rave?
But I see, see! Believe me once!
Burst in, and save!—
Perjured lioness—wolf-mated—two in one!
The dagger!
Are ye blind?—The slaying is begun.
Will one heart's blood suffice? She thirsts for gore;
She crowns the cup—with mine!—
'Tis done—I see no more.
At last I am free; lie there in the dust
Priestess's wand and necklace, for who will and must.
Happier the real crazed vagrant's lot
That scoffers called mine, than truth-telling hearkened not.
Vengeful God, I thank thee, bane of my life,
That thou hast trapped me here under the butcher's knife.—

Ah! boasted I was free?
No, a thrall still—
A bond-slave still to work Apollo's spiteful will;
To warn, and be mocked.
Look! the slaughter-bath;
With a Fiend unlocking a ten years' hoard of wrath!
"May murder riot—no blood-fine be paid?
Is a King to die, and his ghost never be laid?
Nay; do I not in this Mycenæ hear
A stripling, banned, an exile, by the great Gods swear
That for each blood-drop of a father slain
Adulteress and Adulterer shall shed twain?
Prophesy I vain things? I but descry
The future in the past, and you have thought I lie.
Troy sank in flames; and was it not the meed
For a people glorying in a robber's deed?
And if its victors perish, do not they
As just a vengeance for impious fury pay?
And what am I, that I murmur at Fate!
An atom, crushed under the wheels of a wife's hate!
Ye Furies, warders of the gates of Hell,
Grant me but one last pray'r; and then, grey Life, farewell!
I would lie decently, when I am dead.—
Not I fight Destiny; I was royally bred.
"Why enter if I see 'tis death?" you say.
What gain in lengthening life by hours, when my day
Is come? And ill would it befit my race
To skulk away from death, not meet it face to face.
For happy minutes have each its sweet taste;
Years to Priam's daughter are one desolate waste.—

" But horror !
These foul odours that assault
My nostrils, as from fresh-opened ancestral vault
To receive new corpses !
' Scent from the feast
Preparing to regale the victor lord and guest
Beside his household altars ' ?
Nay, a flood,
As, when red Murder stalks abroad, of kindred blood !
Yet—I am strong again—I go within,
For I have a double part to play—
Hark ! begin
Two death-agonies ; and sole Mourner I,
Though also 'tis with Agamemnon mine to die.—
Enough of life for me ; death cannot scare
Me, like a bird, suspecting in each bush a snare.
Only, when a Woman and Man atone
Hereafter for what in this house shall have been done
Stranger-friends, forget not that I died brave ;—
This the last favour that of you I, dying, crave.
" So much for Earth and Life.
And now for Death !
Hear, Sun, the dirge I chant with my expiring breath,
While my eyes drink their last of thy blest light !
Watch, for Thou watchest all, that these butchers requite
The unbefriended Thrall, their easy prey,
For the doom she shares in blood-orgies of to-day !—
Though what am I ? Dust, fallen when Troy fell ;
Scarce reckoned in spoil the Conqueror brought to swell

His triumph!
But He!
Black the sky; and grim
Fortune's changed countenance; how now she scowls at Him!
At the flash of a falchion flit away
A Crown, a Warrior's wreath, Imperial sway!
All shadows, like his Troy!
I to complain
That a Murderess snaps for me a captive's chain!—
"Ha! See not you there your King bleeding lie?—
I come! I come!
I cannot Save; but I can Die!"

CHAIN SONG OF THE FURIES

" SISTERS, join hands for the dance, We who are One and are Three ;
For our measure Three are enough ; no tender lyre need We.
The Muse cares not for charm who inspires our chorus and hymn ;
And mortals gladly would shun what to them is ugly and grim.
But they shall see, and shall hear the rule by which We divide
Their lots ; for, although black our home, We have nothing to hide.
Let them shrink from Us, and abhor ; but respect Us they must ;
For our pride and our pleasure are to be upright and just.
Are any of clean heart and hands, with no sin to conceal ;
They may pass, and in peace ; it is not with such that We deal.
But death, and its agony—appeals of souls being torn
From sun and life by their kinsfolk—half-ghosts, helpless, forlorn—

We minister to them ; straight we rise to Earth at their cry ;
Register foul play, ev'ry charge that they bring as they die.
Though the murderer breast mountain torrent or the sea-flood,
We follow, like sleuth-hounds, the eternal scent of the blood ;
Never halt till We have dragged him face to face with his guilt,
And plunged his soul, stripped and naked, in the gore he has spilt.

" Night ! Night ! our mother, who conceivedst Us, Thou in Thy womb,
On Earth, and after in Hell, to execute righteous doom,
Hear how the Son of Latona now has dared to outstretch
His insolent arms ; snatch from our grasp this cowering wretch,
Banished by Us from his home, hunted by Us from his kind—
This suppliant for death, which, as pleases Us, he shall find—
This pretender to a balance of crimes, forsooth, to set one,
Wife's murder of husband, against a mother's by her son—
This boaster of piety, matricide, venting his ire
On robbers of his heritage, not slayers of his sire—
This chastiser of treason, as if our arm were grown short
Against traitress and traitor, and had wanted his support !

"Dance, Sisters, dance; our unlovely feet
Narrow the mystic circle we beat;
Th'Accurst cannot resist as We sing;—
See! he is stepping within the ring!
Passionless and chill our fateful strain
Fans furnace-fire in the murderer's brain.
High though his impious head he hold,
It shames base metal he prized as gold,
Ravels the toils in which he is caught,
Dazes, amazes, drives astray and distraught,
Is palsy to his soul, a pest-laden wind from the past.
To one torturing, blighting idea ties his whole being fast,
Prisons him in a dungeon of himself, rattling an endless chain,
Withered, a live-ghost, into nothingness, except for the pain!
"Does the stripling God in insulting Us know he defies
Not Us the Three weird sisters that he affects to despise?
He fights a force nor Heaven nor Man may hope to abate—
Which turns not aside, nor falters—irresistible Fate!
Fate spun Us into existence; like her, doggedly We,
Born vassals, study her will, and accomplish her decree.
Best of all, do We loyally her behests, when, as here,
We set our wits, in a tangle of cross murders, to clear
Subtle confusions of motive, and a babel of tongues,
Feigning, all of them, commissions to correct public wrongs.
We keep in obstinate nostrils distinct each sev'ral scent,

Till, troubling Ourselves with no sophisms, We cast, mauled and rent,
A carcase of soul to the Underworld, not even there
Freer after all than in life while breathing upper air!
This the lot we were born to, as born were the Gods to theirs;
Fate gave Us no bright raiment; We to poor things were made heirs:
Strange heritage ours, the reek of some rank butcherly strife,
When nearest who should be dearest are spoiled of home and life;
Blood, freshly dripping, We love; by it the Slayer to track;
Blot him out of existence, though with a host at his back.
Look, with long strides he comes in virtue of strength and of birth,
And pride—his!—of being the champion of Right upon Earth;
We crouch, like leopard on bough, leap from above; and there low,
Fallen and crushed, a mangled mass, heavy-footed our blow,
Lies he, sensible only that o'er him broods something worse
Than horrors of the present—an intolerable Curse.

"One business ours, to punish; the only wages We ask,
To be free to warn off even Gods, while We do our task!

With our work our ways have We; no appeals lie from our Court;
Barren any prayers to outside Powers for support;
Alone We work at our toil; no fellowship seek in care;
So, when We sit and feast, We invite not others to share.
We do as We are done by; ask your Olympian Zeus
When He has bid to His board guests gore-bedraggled like Us!
Men trust in human glory! how immutable it seems,
As in the noonday radiance the golden Palace gleams!
We steal from where We dwell
Black-robed in our drear cell;
Round the splendour, the awe
Of the grand show We draw
Our magic ring; a blight
Blots out the gay sunlight;
And as our jealous feet
Their dull sad cadence beat,
From within the tracing of the ominous round,
Returns the golden emanation underground;
And in a mist which makes a funereal dome,
A pall to canopy the desolated home,
Groaning incoherent tales, a maniac,
Unknowing himself contriver of the rack,
Staggers beneath the shadow of his own sin,
Wondering what he is, and what he has been.

"Steadfast our purpose, fulfilling itself in many modes;
But the goal always is one, however diverse the roads.
Our memories store ill deeds, as misers hoard up their gold;

And mortals love Us not, for We are pitiless and cold.
In garbage We grope, and drag rottenness into the light;
Kindness and joyance for Gods; We are children of night and blight.
If We light a torch, 'tis to cheat our prey stumbling in front;
We need no such flickering to guide our feet in the hunt.
Tremble, Mortals, hearing the ordinance that the Fates framed,
Heaven, receiving, could not but sign, and We have proclaimed,—
'That, though blood kinsmen have shed seem awhile to be dumb,
By commission to Us it shall rise, and plead from the tomb.'
In the Sunless Land is our post; there our vigils We keep,
Till Time is ripe for a Ghost to haunt the Murderer's sleep.
Thankless our work; and We know it. Mortals, loathe, as ye will!
We, with our whip of serpents, shall glory in scourging Ill!"

SOPHOCLES

No two writers, each great, of plays are more unlike in the action of them than Æschylus and Sophocles. Sophocles, like Æschylus, was a poet of high genius. In drama he was first of all a dramatist. He accepted, took, or made a story, framed it playwise; then put its characters, with the vitality he had inspired, on the stage. In relation to them, their activity there, he is nothing but playwright. It may be objected that this is mere word-trickery; it is the same mind in a different capacity; the author shuffles the pieces as he pleases. With a thorough artist this is not true. As a playwright he ought not; therefore he cannot. The Chorus is outside the rule. He may lead that in praise of his own dear Colonus; even exalt the dominion of Aphrodité and her child Eros. Elsewhere he is on honour not to interfere with the laws of the being he had bestowed.

The result is a statuesque certainty of effect. One scene in the "Œdipus Tyrannus" is supreme. The downfallen, blind prince describes to Theban townsmen the fatal encounter with his father Laius, at the Three Ways, with none left for witness but a gurgling brook. Simple the means, overpowering the impression! Every line, though the reader, the spectator, knows the whole tragedy, compels a pause before he allows himself to

recognize his knowledge. The Dramatist never loses control of his own emotions. A stillness, serenity almost, infuses itself into catastrophes the most volcanic. Eternal calm broods over the victim of Fate. Modern students hang, as would the thousands of rapt Athenians, not on the lines of the Poet, but on the sightless outlaw, during the awful moments when he defends his self-effacement from all human society!

Throughout the dramatic remains, and in all surviving allusions to the much of which we deplore the loss, Sophocles shows the same abnegation of self. Characters in his plays live their own lives in essentials. We have only to recollect the Antigone of the "Œdipus in Colonus" to be sure how she would treat the edict of Creon. The descent into the tomb and end there were the inevitable dramatic triumph of a heroine over a tyrant. It is the same with the "Ajax." For the dramatist the Ajax was Homer's champion of Hellas, no casual victim of a fit of madness, in sheep's shambles. Fallen, the mighty fighter, as of necessity in a wrestle of muscles with brains, has to die, but dies grandly.

The moderation, the evenness, the self-restraint, of the Poet as Dramatist, after some twenty-five centuries, make themselves still felt. Wielded, hurled, by the fancy of Æschylus, the passion, the wrath, the combative philosophy of "Prometheus," the vindictiveness, as scorching as cold-blooded, of the Furies, cleave their way irresistibly, are audible whatever the tongue. Scholarship helplessly suspects, even hopes, that a proper appreciation of Sophocles, and of his delicate dramatic conscience, has suffered through the impossibility of representing the mellowed harmony of Attic diction through the medium of downright English.

ŒDIPUS VINDICATES HIS BLINDNESS

And what see I, sightless?
Three roads meet;—
Briars narrow the space for jostling feet
Of men and horses.
Stone deaf, I should hear
That old man's "orders," and that young man's
jeer;—
Now, swords clashing; now, stillness, as of death—
Save a hidden brook murmuring beneath
Soil gore-red—a father's—by a son shed!
So, I left Lord, Charioteer, stark dead,
Drift I on Hell's trail. Invisible then,
Though, Cross Roads, not to you, the blood of men
Ye had drunk;—why not have warned?—for ye knew
What having done I was cursed by Fate to do!
Nuptials begetting nuptials! Rabble rout;
Sires, brothers, children, mothers, wives, in and out!
Mass all adulteries since Earth began;
Match this kennel of foulness if you can!
But enough! ev'n to tell of it must shame,
As to do shamed nature!—
In Heaven's name,
Hasten; and put me anywhere, away;
Stab me, if you will; or throw, a sea-stray,

From a cliff;—so that never I again
Be seen of mortal eyes!
For pity, deign
To touch a poor wretch!
You will catch no ache
Through my disease; 'tis one none but myself can take!

ŒDIPUS AT COLONOS

Col., vv. 668–719.

Stranger, old, and bent, and blind,
Thy guide—or Heaven, or Chance—was kind
In leading Thee with gracious hand
To the crown of all our happy land.
Listen, how in this gleaming dale
Sings Thy welcome the nightingale—
Now clear, now soft the warbling from the shade,
The pale green twilight of the woodland glade.
The full notes rise and fall,
Tenderest madrigal,
From the tangle of dark ivy,
And the many-fruited greenery,
Which neither suns of July can parch,
Nor dust-storms scatter and toss in March.
A wild-garden this of ours,
Of flowers upon flowers,
Crocuses each a gold-ray,
And, aye dew-fed day by day,
The Narcissus in fair clusters blooming by its side,
Unforgetting how long since it had been its pride
In Sicilian Enna's meadow to entwine
Wreaths for Demeter and beauteous Proserpine.

Hark ! how threading rocks, leaping hills,
Carol multitudinous rills,
Sleepless through the listening night,
Chattering, flashing in sunlight,
With broods of quickening showers
Ministering to spring flowers ;
Till, one on another, as in frolic and play,
Vaulting and bounding, each pursuing its own way,
All join Cephisus, where plunging from its high crest
It heaps the laughing harvests on the plain's wide breast.
Haunt of Gods, this spot whither, stranger, Thou art come ;
And we with gladness hail their visits to our home.
Often 'tis Bacchus, by torchlight,
Through forest, over pathless height,
To drum-beat leading his glad band,
Nymphs, his adorers, through our land.
Nor are the Muses absent, dancing, and with song,
Or Aphrodité driving her chariot along.

ANTIGONE FRONTING HER TOMB

Antig., vv. 891–903.

O Cavern grim, my dwelling-place below,
Jailer of this poor flesh, seal of its woe,
  Thou canst not lock me long in thy dour vault,
The only bridal chamber I shall know.

Death! Thou'rt no stranger to the kings from whom
I count descent; of a royal line I come.
  Hast thou not garnered all their noblest, best?
Unkind thou'rt called—not to me, bound for home!

Few have my days on earth been; and all sore
Stained my young memories with care—the more
  Black for a mother's griefs, and, Sire, for thine—
Both tenfold dearer for each pang you bore.

And dearer you for yours, my brethren twain,
Clasped in whose arms I will forget the pain
  Of life, and you your hate drowned in my love—
Two rancours healed, doubling a sister's gain.

For one I die; for both in that lone cell
I live in love—Brothers—you know it well—
  For you, the Womb that bare, Sire that begot—
Love, without which Heav'n's self for me were Hell!

AJAX TO HIS SWORD

Ajax, vv. 815–65.

Stand there, good Sword; be firm, and do thy work.
Had I leisure, hadst thou, to play with words—
The wit, the heart—well might we reason out
Right for that we have on hand:—first, gift Thou
Hector's—hateful to Me all foreign blood,
His most, and, among foes of Greece, he most;—
Next, the mould wherewith I have girt thee round,
Trojan earth which loathes Greek feet treading it,
And thirsts e'en now to drink up my heart's blood;—
Lastly, for that thou art a trusty blade,
Which chooses for its Lord, whoe'er he be,
Death in workmanlike way, if die he will.
This settled, well, in life;—after? what then?
Zeus—for I trace from Thee—grant this I ask—
Little, precious—that Teucer first of all
May learn, and draw Me off the reeking sword,
Lest I be spied by some one of my foes,
And cast a prey for dogs and birds to tear.
Just that, O Zeus, I kneeling crave of Thee!
To Thee, winged Hermes, also here I cry;
Guide of the Dead from Earth to Hades, come,
Lead with friendly hands to the realms below;
Thou shalt not wait; I know how, by one leap

On this brave sword, to wrench the life away,
Without ev'n a spasm, from my gaping side!
Ay, and I summon the dread Sisters three.—
Ye of stern virginity, keen to mark
Wrongs of poor mortals, hasten with long stride;
Be Judges, Advocates, Avengers be!
Let Me face the Atreidæ; hear Me tell
How they have brought my life to utter nought.
Condemn, and snatch the caitiffs where their doom,
As absolute, as ugly, as is mine,
Is wrought on them by hands dear as their own,
Their ruin's depth condignly matching mine.
Yea; and why, righteous Furies, slack your course?
Spare not! make the entire Greek host to taste
Ruth for their guilty Princes—all have sinned!
Hate? Good such hate! Alas! that I am dear,
And bring pain infinite to those I love!
Bright Sun-God, driving Thou thy car on high,
As Thou look'st down on my ancestral isle,
Pluck thy gold-studded rein, to break the news
Of my perdition, and untimely fate,
To the Old Man, my Father, and to Her
Who bore and suckled me. Ah! when She hears,
The mourners She will lead the City through!
Enough vain grieving—now to do—and quick!—
Though, Death, one moment! ere I come to Thee,
Thou and I will have leisure to converse
In plenty There, where soon we shall be mates.—
But while I still behold Thee, Light of Day,
I would greet Thee, and thy Charioteer,
A last and only time—never again!
Thee also, holy soil of Salamis,
Whereon my home, my Father's hearth, were raised;

And famous Athens, with its kindred race ;
Nor forget I Troy's rivers, springs and plains ;
For they have helped nourish Me ;
once for aye
Hearken ; let Ajax bid you all, Farewell !
Hence wends He, among Shadows, shadows to
discourse !

EURIPIDES

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To understand, and place, Euripides we must not take Æschylus, much less Sophocles, for our dramatic measure or standard. He is sensible that he addresses his audience from a stage ; yet he binds himself by no theatrical rules, has no dramatic conscience, or etiquette. He is poet and dramatist combined, and moralist besides. Very modern in feeling otherwise, he is especially a Modern in his employment of tears. Very rarely in a Play of his is pathos wholly absent, as it is from the exuberant melody and fantastic imaginativeness of the wonderful "Bacchæ." Commonly he runs up and down the whole scale, using its powers, even weaknesses. In the grand hymn on Demeter, with more suppleness he reaches the sublimity of Pindar. Note how the Mother of the Gods bows Herself to seek, not as Goddess, as a human mother, her ravished daughter. It, not the royal pride, spiritualizes Polyxena's claim to offer herself, not as devoted by her country's foes, to the Ghost of her slain bridegroom. It purifies and sweetens the savagery of Hecuba over child-Astyanax. It connects and reconciles Iphigenia's horror at a father's immolation of an unwilling victim to Artemis with the splendour of her insistence on her right to despatch the Hellenic Armada to the destruction of pirate Troy. Continually it is used in

plays on War as a lever to lift blood and havoc to a nobler level.

Whether the occasion for its use arise or not in the course of the action is a matter of indifference to him. In the agony of Troy a queenly mother has the news of Polyxena's voluntary execution of her doom brought by a Herald. For the Poet, as Euripides always—drama or not—was, the distinction was immaterial. He was subject to manifold fits of inspiration which demanded an audience. The Theatre of Athens was open to him; and he availed himself of its hospitality, though often not enthusiastic. For rules he cared not, if it suited his inspiration to break them. He was a teacher; and thousands on the benches were not unwilling to be taught. Critics might tell him he prosed. Crowds, though it were so, listened, and learned. In the opinion of enough others he was a magician, and charmed those who were not of the deaf adder brood. These latter at any rate could not drive him dumb. They jested upon him; accused him of Atheism; spread malignant stories, the viler if at all true, about griefs in his domestic life; grudged the admiration he won from wise thinkers. Bravely he went on writing till death took him, at the age of seventy-four, in a species of voluntary exile at the Court of Macedonian Archelaus. He was always better valued abroad than at home. A noble Epigram attributed to Thucydides attempts to clear Athens as a City of complicity in the baiting of one of its chief glories. It fails to convince.

Renown apparently did not save other illustrious dramatic careers from trouble in Ancient Athens. Æschylus had to stand trial for impiety! An attempt was made to deny Sophocles management of his affairs

on the ground of senile decay! Happily the fertility of all three marvellous brains in supplying the national stage seemed to thrive the more for the poisonous pin-pricks. As little, it may be hoped, minded it the scanty concession of prizes. Euripides, in particular, for his seventy-five or ninety-two Plays was seldom crowned. Not, apparently, that his seniors were more generously rewarded. Time has been a little more liberal in saving but seven apiece for Æschylus and Sophocles, as against, for Euripides, seventeen or eighteen, according as the "Rhesus" is included or omitted. For sheer literary merit, and as classics, I dare say, it may be thought that the general neglect is terrible. But, as I remarked earlier, the work of Euripides keeps a winning modern flavour. Even in his disregard of literary and dramatic conventions, he is able to come closer to fellow human instincts. Put to the bitter necessity of declaring with which of the great Three we could least easily dispense, we might find Euripides the hardest to pluck out of our hearts!

DEMETER'S SEARCH FOR PROSERPINE

Helena, vv. 1301–52.

I

It was when this world was young,
And no minstrel yet had sung,
That the Mother of Gods with hurried feet
Over mountain, meadow, moor,
Through glens, and where rivers laugh to meet
Ocean's deep-resounding roar,
Rushed in a passion Divine of wrath, love, despair,
Seeking her lovely daughter lost, carried She knew not where!

II

As her team of lions bore
The lamenting Goddess o'er
Earth courting her caresses, and her wail
For the maid stol'n from her hand
Pierced the clash of castanets on the gale,
Goddesses, a virgin band,
Wind-Nymphs, Pallas, with Gorgon's head and panoply,
And Artemis, joined in the search for sweet Persephone.

III

Vain;—and sad for playmate lost
In girlhood—as for bud tost
In May from rose-tree by a northern blast—
Pallas, Huntress, Nymphs wind-shod,
Back to their Olympian nectar passed,
Mourning as mourns a God;
And, as they parted from Demeter, pondered when
She would be found among their company in Heav'n again!

IV

But in Her the Mother stirred
Beyond the Goddess:—
She heard
And bade, farewells;—
Then loosened from their yoke
Her lions; then laid aside
Her wreath, her torch; even her sceptre broke,
Stripping her soul of all pride,
Of ethereal calm that reigns above,
Of Immortal limits to the last agony of love!

V

No longer a Goddess She;—
Nought but Mother would She be.—
A lonely Woman, ragged and forlorn,
Begging scraps that dogs had spurned,
Beseeching tidings of a Daughter torn
From her embrace; often turned
Into the drear night with rude gibing from the door;
Then, some clue, which broke;—leaving Her more hopeless than before!

VI

Patient of roughness, sorrow;
Humbling Godhead to borrow
Help from Man, of no more avail than Heav'n;
She, of Gods most innocent,
Who, more than all, for human kind had striv'n,
In heart and brain worn and spent
With groping for a way out whence there was way none,
On the ground down fell swooning, comfortless, childless, alone.

VII

It was Ida's topmost peak,
Where Nymphs of the mountain seek
For strays that the call of warm blood in spring—
Scent, violet and primrose—
Has set on the high uplands wandering
For joys no other flock knows.—
There in a stony, snow-deep thicket lay She prone,
Where, only not dead because Divine, She herself had thrown!

VIII

Meanwhile nor garden nor field
Would its herbs and flowers yield;
The woods no more put forth their soft green leaves
For the crumpled-horned beasts;
Gaunt hunger stalked beneath the cities' eaves;
Altars missed their wonted feasts;
Even each dew-fed reservoir of water kept
Its sparkling fountains closely sealed because its Lady wept.

IX

Then Zeus, eager for relief
To the Mother's angry grief
Threatening famine, bade the Graces arm
Themselves, and the Queen of Love,
With all their joint artillery of charm,—
Though they should leave night above ;—
And lead with them the sister Muses down to Earth ;
So, by hymn and dance, to conjure an aching breast to mirth.

X

Forth came from Olympus they,
With, surpassing bright and gay,
Aphrodité at their head, and a troop
Of boys their loudest to boom
On the cymbals with their brassiest whoop,
And the Ox-skinned kettledrum ;—
Till the Goddess started from her starved, care-worn sleep,
In the shock of her amazement forgetting ev'n to weep !

XI

Still, as in a half trance, She
Listened to the melody
Of the Muses singing ; watched the Graces
Intertwining in the dance,
And gazed with rapture on their sweet faces,
Now in retreat, now advance ;
While, all through, the Cyprian Queen assumed command,
By title of Beauty's right divine, of the whole joyous band.

XII

Ne'er had felt Demeter this
Blissful wonder, wond'ring bliss.
Weeping She smiled once more, and smiling wept.
She touched a flute ; without breath
It warbled, and Nature at one note leapt
Into warm life out of death.—
Praise be to Music ! healer it of Earth's alarms !
Music, that shall bring a Daughter home to a Mother's arms.

BACCHANTES AT THEBES

Bacchæ, vv. 64–162.

From the land of Asia to Hellas we come,
With one cry on our lips to the ancient home
Of Him, Lord Divine of the dance and of song.
Hither He has led us who to Tmolus belong.
Sweet pains ours, grateful toil,
To tread and kiss the soil,
Where He drew his first breath
On the bosom of Death!

As we circle these halls, hurry, men, and pray
Dionysus to pardon! Out of my way
All that hymn not our God! dare utter a word
But of glory to Dionysus our Lord!
Blest, of fair destiny,
Skilled in God's wisdom he
Who knows Him. None are wise
But they of the Mysteries!

When our ears, Lord of Revels, opened to hear
Thy summons to the hills! shame straightway and fear
Fell off us as dust; and over land and sea—
How, we know not—old, young, fleet, halt, we followed
Thee!

When invisible Thou art,
Thy image is in the heart;
Thy pity, thy love how vast!
How, too, Thy anger can blast!

Thousandfold paid were we for past years of ills
By that first night when we burst into the hills,
With wild dancing and song to inaugurate
The rites, ivy-crowned, of Cybele the Great!
On that dread day his were we sealed
By the Mysteries He revealed!
His, with his spirit to abide,
Companions of the Sanctified.

He calls, we come: glad now to this City proud;
For here maid Semele, the royal, was wooed
In the plenitude of her conquering charms,
By Zeus, stooping from Olympus to her arms;
And here, from a womb lightning-torn,
Was our Lord Dionysus born;
And the mighty Sire cleft his own
Flesh as a cradle for his son.

Thence—while hard-by lay mere ashes, the girl-bride—
Remorseful lightnings keeping their watch beside—
Was our Lord delivered duly, God from God;
Horns upon his brows, snakes hissing from his rod;
And Fate bade Him go forth,
East and west, south and north,
Without sword, shield, or bow,
To lay citadels low;

To win empires by mirth; witch man, and tame
brute,
By minstrelsy's magic; with cymbal and lute
The captive set free; and Kings' edicts defy;
Inexplicable; thunder in a blue sky;
His Creed, to dance and sing
Is the best worshipping,
And to laugh and rejoice,
More than wailing, God's voice!

Thebes, that nursedst Semele's beauty to wean
Zeus from his vows and plighted troth to His Queen,
Our Lord Dionysus orders us to warn
Thee and Thine, repent you in time of your scorn
Of his Godhead; haste! no delay;
Wave Thyrsi; don festal array
Of faun-skins; blue field-flowers twine;
Deck house-fronts with oak leaves and pine.

Laggards! build ye altars to Him! search the groves
To hallow your heads with the chaplets He loves.
Your women already laud Semele's son.
Thousands, tens of thousands, dancing on and on,
Quitting distaff and shuttle and loom,
Mother leaving babe, bride her bridegroom,
Up grim Kithæron's cavernous steep,
As gad-fly-bitten, riot and leap.

Wake, flute, and drum, that—where the Curetes
dwell—
Unto Zeus's nurses in their Cretan cell—
A wild cry to the Corybantes found,
Passes to the Satyrs, maddened at the sound.

Hark to the drum as it roars,
While higher and shriller soars
The Phrygian flute, and our feet
Time in a fine frenzy beat.

Men, ye are warned; we call with drum, flute and lute;
Take your choice, cry for pardon, or stand ye mute;
Be mad as we are, or sober—as ye will;
For hear Him—do ye not?—we are for the hill!
Strange the road: yet no guide we need;
Our Lord is in front; He will lead.
Tmolus, Kithæron—where we roam,
The print of his feet makes all home.

Sisters, remember ye the long autumn nights—
Weeks was it, or years back?—on Lydian heights,
When away He would burst in chase of hill goat,
Across torrents, crags, and catch it by the throat;
Then throw Him down to sleep
Among us on the steep,
While Nature, as He slept,
A solemn silence kept—

And before the midnight was come, start up, take
A flaming pine torch, and bid us all awake.
Ah! how gladsome we to see his bright eyes glance,
And join our Master in the triumphant dance;
While at the touch of his feet divine,
Flowed, in runlets, honey, milk, and wine,
With clouds of frankincense earth had stored,
Rich tribute to its laughing Lord.

Courage, sisters, again we shall Him behold,
As on Tmolus, where earth runs wine, and streams gold;
See as we have seen –God, Man—many and one—
Divers for the world, the same for us alone;
Locks tossing, a golden show'r, in the breeze,
Voice, high, and then low, music in all keys,
Eyes, blue-flashing stars, mouth a red flow'r—
Girl for the charm, God for the pow'r!

Hark! the drum booms its roar, its Phrygian cries,
While the flute with notes soft and holy replies,
Hear ye Dionysus summoning his flock,
To frolic through the forest, from rock to rock,
Where, on Kithæron, the mad rout
He leads—the whole air one wild shout:
"Evoe, Evoe! None be adored,
But Bacchus, Bacchus, King and Lord!"

A PATRIOT MARTYR

Iphig. in Aul., vv. 1368–1401; and 1434–1508.

"Wroth with my Father, Mother? 'tis unjust;
How can we help but do what do we must?
And Achilles, though noble he to stake
Life in my cause—how suffer him to take
Arms against a host! Mother, what if thus
Mischance befell a stranger, and through us!
Listen, my Mother, now that I have brought
Truth home to me; yes, to my inmost thought.
I have resolved myself;—it is to die;
And besides, I will die gloriously!
Read my heart, Mother; see, how fair a show,
And worthy of our race, my head to bow.
This hour upon nought else but me the whole
Of Hellas dwells—fears, hopes—with all its soul.
'Tis mine to loose or bind; to say the word,
Whether waste Phrygia with fire and sword—
For guilt of Paris venge us on his land—
Or tempt now and again a robber band
To repeat the foul act; to steal from Greece
Well-dowered brides, and hold their spoil in peace.
My death is a shield for Achæan fame
It will scare pirates; blest shall be my name.

And bethink thee what right thou hast to cling
On my behalf so fondly to the thing
Called Life; for thou didst bear me to be one
In a million parts, and not thine alone.
Count men of the spear, ten thousand; on shore,
Seamen as many skilled to ply the oar;
All straining to fight the foe, e'en to death;
The sole check the heaving of my poor breath!
To keep this justly falling balance straight,
Shall we light among Greeks the fire of hate—
Goad my Wooer for me to set his life
Against a whole host in desperate strife—
Why, would not Greece be paid by one Man's birth,
Did girls by thousands lose their shares of Earth!
And now a Goddess has been pleased to choose
This body of mine; how can I refuse,
I a mortal! Rather, while free I live,
Myself to Hellas body, soul, I give!
I come a willing sacrifice; and when
Our race shall be remembered among men,
For me shall stand in place of wedded joy,
Sons of my womb, the waste where once stood Troy!

Slaves from beyond the Pale steer here, and flout
Free, queenly Hellas? Perish the base thought!
Silent, my Mother? Weepest?—Oh, forbear!
In pity cease! Shed thou for me no tear;
Make me not a coward; I will not have
Thee shear those dear locks, clothe thee for a grave
As of a lost child; I have stored for thee
And me, not years, but immortality!
No mere common earth is this body's doom;
An Altar, Zeus's daughter's, is my tomb!

Good Mother! Thou believest me at last—
I bring Greece deliverance, and have cast
A fortunate lot?—
'Askest what to say
From me to my young sisters?'—That I pray
Them not to mourn.—
'And for Orestes here?'—
Brother! let me embrace thee, dearest dear,
My help, all thou couldst!—
Mother, I entreat—
Watch o'er him till he be of man's estate—
For I may not!—
A last look! my one woe!
'Aught else to do for me?'—
Wilt not forgo
Thy anger with my sire? He loves me well,
Although Greece better; it is as I tell
Thee of Life and Me.—
No? Then, here we part.
And, Mother, no more tears! Spare this torn heart!
No further; my Father's guards shall attend
Me to the meadow where will be the end.

Proclaim silence, Heralds; and, Maidens, sing
To Artemis! already the priests bring
Barley to awake the flame; the King stands
Clasping the hallowed Altar with both hands;
And I come—to deliver, to destroy!
Champion of Hellas—stormer I of Troy!
Pour ye the purifying water down;
And flow'rs! my locks the sacrifice shall crown
Around the temple dance; around the shrine.—
Blood to content the Oracle? Lo! Mine!

A single moment :—
Mother, I must keep
E'en Heav'n's feast waiting, while for thee I weep ;
Revered, ah ! how revered ! a last Farewell !—

Dance ye, Maidens, again ; and, dancing, swell
The Chant to Artemis ; pray Her set free,
For my sake, our spears ; waft them o'er the sea.
Then, when our pæans sound in Troy, let not
Her name who sent the Victors be forgot !

Enough ;—I cease to tread Pelasgic earth ;
No more Mycenæ mine that gave me birth,
And nursed me for the deed in Hellas I
Triumph to do, although by it I die !
For me no more bright-beaming Day, that wells
From deep fountains in the Heav'ns where Zeus dwells.
Adieu to Life ! it and its Fate have done
Their worst, their best !—A knife's flash ! I am gone
Thither where, behind a black veil, for me
A new World waits, and a new Destiny !

Witness, Friends, All ; I die of my free will !—
And yet—I love thee, Sunshine ; love thee still ! "

TROY'S LAST NIGHT

Hecub., vv. 905–52.

"No more, my Ilium, will be heard thy glorious boast,
That Thou hast never echoed the tread of alien host;
Alas! warriors of Hellas, a tempest-cloud on Thee,
Hide all that Thou wast from my soul's eye when it strives to see.
Thy crown of towers they have shorn; soot fouls thy marble brow.
Who even in fancy could care to walk thy pavements now!
In the middle of the night descended on Me my doom;
Then I perished out of life, entering a living tomb.—
Sacrifice had been offered; and at last the feast was done;
Music and dancing had ceased: all the joyous guests were gone;
On tired eyes sweet sleep was fluttering down; my bridegroom lay
In our chamber, on the couch—idle war-gear put away
Upon the wall beside him—he not thinking ever more
To view the hated sailor-throng trampling upon our shore.

I too would go to rest, and set my golden mirror where
'Twould light me while I bound within its snood my braided hair—
When a jubilant shout, 'mid screams and shrieks, came ringing down
The night:
'Greeks! ours the citadel! Now, ho! to sack the town!'
My beloved one snatched his spear: he was butchered by my side;
No help from Dian, whom I served ere I became a bride;
As in waking dream, I was rocking on the salt sea-flood,
Looking-back on where my City, my Ilium, had stood;
Then swooned, and have breathed since but to call curses on the head
Of the Greek woman, with her paramour, and lawless bed.
Gods! avenge Me on their marriage—nay none, but, it might seem,
A spume from Hell's abyss, a spiteful Demon's lustful dream!
Toss, briny Ocean, Helen, Ilium's bane, forsak'n, lone!
Her play robbed Me of home; Heav'n! let Her never reach her own!"

POLYXENA

Hecub., vv. 503–82.

The Achæan host hoping to give peace
To dead Peleides, ere it sailed for Greece,
Had vengefully resolved to soothe his Ghost
With the blood of Her he had loved and lost.
The loathsome task was on Odysseus laid
To announce the sentence and bring the Maid.
With brave heart Polyxena had received
Her doom, and went; not for herself she grieved!
Day waned, when lo! the Greek Herald.—He found
Hecuba, locks dust-dabbled, on the ground,
Hoping nought so much as that he was come
To drag her to the shambles at the Tomb.
Not therefore was he sent if by the Foe;
The news, if dire, held glory in the woe.
The Messenger himself was kind and old;
You felt the tears within the tale he told:
"Thou knowest, Lady, Odysseus was sent
Hither by my Lords, and how hence he went
With thy Daughter to the sepulchre, where
One universal whisper filled the air.
The Hero's Son, taking her by the hand,
Stationed her on the Tomb. There a picked band
Of youths fenced her about, lest she might flee—

Frightened fawn—in a spasm of agony.
Next, he, having with both hands lifted up—
Filled to the brim—a vast all-golden cup,
Bade me silence proclaim; and at my sign
And shout all sounds were hushed. He, as the wine
Ran trickling through his fingers, cried aloud:
'Father, I am fulfilling all I vowed;
May thy Son's offering conduct thy Ghost
Where—gift from Me and the Achæan host—
It can drink its fill of pure virgin blood,
Retribution on Priam's traitor brood!
In return, be good to thy comrades; free
Our cables; speed Us home, where'er that be!'
"The host acclaimed; he drew his golden blade;
Signing to the ches'n guard to bring the Maid.
Achæans—tens of thousands—stood around,
In gleaming armour, the sepulchral mound;
And on it, all alone, a young girl stood,
Viewed by myriads thirsting for her blood.
It might have been a lone spot she had sought
On Ida's slopes for solitary thought;
It might have been her Father's halls she trod;
It might have been the Temple of her God.
No need of warriors to bar her flight;
Neither loved she life, nor of death felt fright;
Nor wrath, nor yet defiance;—her sole pride,
As she had lived, to be that, when she died!
"She had read the sign;—standing on the hill,
By more than speech she counter-signed her will.
In natural accents of a young maid,
Spoke she; but as she meant to be obeyed;
Low though her voice, the hush, the summer air,
Winged it; spread her meaning everywhere:

" ' Argives,' she phrased it, ' Ye have overthrown
My Sire's capital city, stone by stone,
And decree my sacrifice.—I hail death,
But will not as a slave draw my last breath.
Slay me ! 'tis your right ; but in Heaven's face
Free must I die, as it befits my race.
I cannot brook the dead below should call
Me who was born of royal rank, a thrall.
Look ! I will bare my skin with my own hand ;
Strike where Ye will ; but strike at my command ! '
" The host roared ' Yea ! ' and Agamemnon bade
The guards to stand aside, nor touch the Maid.
" She heard ; and plucking at her robe in haste,
Rent it from neck down to her slender waist,
Stripping her virgin breast and chest of snow,
So lovely could no painter, sculptor, show ;
Then, with one knee upon the rough earth pressed,
Spoke words the bravest, saddest, patientest :
' Good Executioner, if thou shouldst care
To stab my heart, here is my bosom bare ;
If higher up, my throat is ready too ! '
And the Prince, it might almost seem, with rue,
That it was, as his father's son, his fate
To divorce, from form so fair, a soul so great,
Unwilling, willing—yet not so, nor so—
Blindly struck whence founts of breathing flow.
Life's springs burst ; but heedful was she in death
Seemly to fall !—
When she sighed her last breath,
A weight lifted ; hearts with remorse grown faint
Glowed now, as at the parting of a Saint !
Funeral gifts showered down ; leaves some strewed
Upon the body ; some fetched from the wood

Pine to feed the pyre; thousands sought to bring—
Aught, vestments, or trinkets—an offering.
Shame upon him who grudged; mean cur, too blind
To see how passing high such heart and mind!

"Thus was it, Lady, that thy Daughter died;
And I am here, the Herald, sent to guide
Thee where my Chiefs thy loved one's obsequies
Prepare, hard by where our Achilles lies.
Old I, but ne'er in peace or war have seen
Woman than thee more hapless—slave or Queen—
And of Mothers a happier.—
The bliss
To have, alive or dead, a Child like This!"

ARISTOPHANES

ARISTOPHANES

My wish throughout is to produce by a few specimens a fair general view of the excellence of my sitter for the moment. Among Attic tragic dramatists—whenever sufficient has survived for a decision—a choice has not been difficult. It is not easy with Aristophanes. Humour, wit, variety of colour, bitterness—sweetness, with strength—are certain of recognition. His genius scintillates among many different properties. Contemporary judgment of his powers was expressed in the epigram attributed to Plato: "The Graces searching for a shrine too harmoniously designed for a storm to fix on a fatal weakness anywhere, were content with the soul of Aristophanes." True, doubtless; though to be able to prove it we ought to be contemporaries and fellow-townsmen.

Very often he seems to be about to deliver himself of a satisfying lyric when the demand of the comedy carries him off. He is thus diverted in the "Clouds" and "Knights." Less in the "Birds"; for instance bursts such as, even in my inadequate verse, the call of King Hoopoe to Procne, whom Aristophanes chooses for his Nightingale. The melody flings itself to and fro, grave to gay, insolent to gentle, with a sureness in which all three Graces might have securely lodged. None of

his majestic fellow-dramatists could from this point of view have surpassed, perhaps equalled him. In his singing is more of a bird's trill than elsewhere in Greek drama, so far as time has suffered us to judge. He must have known, felt, he had a theme where his genius found the exact notes to suit it. The misfortune of our modern age is that it happens also to be the only song of sustained melody and length to illustrate and justify the universal praise. All the existing comedies abound in lyrical lines;—if they had but been available in draughts, and not in mere sips!

Readers, however, will find full sources in Hookham Frere's and B. B. Roger's admirable translations, though Frere's only of four Plays. If they wish for an Imitation, let them read Dean Mansel's incomparable Chorus of the Clouds in his "Phrontisterion."

KING HOOPOE TO THE NIGHTINGALE

Aves, vv. 209–23.

"Sleepest, my sweet Mate, still?
Awake, and set flowing each liquid note
At thy music's fountain-head to trill
From the oped gateway of thy tawny throat
Hallowed off'rings, to thy Darling and mine,
Itys, of hymns Divine.
Hark! clear through the full leafage of the yew
Pierces the strain, and Phœbus, hearing thine,
Tunes his lyre the long lament to renew,
Till it overflows Zeus's Throne, and all
The Heavens, and the blue
Æther, while, at the Golden-haired One's call
Gathers on Olympus the Blessed Choir,
And with my Mate's own 'Itys, Itys!' cry
Takes up the symphony of Apollo's lyre—
Both dirge, and lullaby!"

LEADER OF BIRD CHORUS

Aves, vv. 676–783.

"O my Darling! my sweetest Sweet!
Can it be mine once more to greet
Her whose song I dream in the grove;
My one theme could I sing of love,
Though only now that I rejoice
In Thee, sing I; for Thou'rt my voice!
Strike up, Flute! tawny Darling, sing!
Hark! her voice has brought the Spring!"

With the Nightingale.

"Hither, blear-eyed creatures that, Men, you are by birth,
Do-nothings, figures of clay, dull compounds of earth;
Souls frail as Autumn leaves, May-flies without the wings,
Shadows from day-dreams, death's crop, miserable things!
Listen to Us who from pure Æther draw our breath,
Who always Are, existing free of Age and Death.
Thoughts we think decay not. To your uttermost try
To understand our tale of Being in the sky,
Of Birds, and how Gods, Chaos, Erebus, began,

Then you'll know much more than Men ever learned
from Man.
This was Nature's order; Chaos, and Night, the first,
Erebus, wide Hell, next, though yet there were none
accurst.
Earth was not, or Air, or Heaven, or Sun and Day;
But it occurred to winged Night a wind-egg to lay
In the multitudinous bosom, blank and cold,
Of Erebus. Due—though Time was not Hours told;
Issued longing Eros, with golden wings behind,
That stormily flapped and flashed, as a North-west wind.
So, Desire was, and, having nothing else to do,
As he flew about waste Tartarus to and fro,
Made love to Chaos, sister of his mother Night,
Hatching Us, for whom somehow he manufactured
Light.
Easy work the rest between Us, below, above;
For We needed to fly, perch, feed, and He to love.
Thence a hotchpotch of Erebus, Chaos, Night, and
Hell;
Air, water, ground, and fire, for good and bad, to
dwell.
Heaven thus came about, with Ocean, and this Earth;
And the Blessed Gods, imperishable, had birth.
But it is a clear and indisputable truth
That we had long been Gods when these were in their
youth;
For we were Love's first-born, endowed by Him with
wings,
And made His distributors of all happy things.
Thus, who like us to mark the Seasons in their train?
Sow? Note the scream as he wends southwards of
the crane;

And the hint the shipmaster too may take to stow
His rudder, and bide on shore till kind winds shall blow
See, the kite circles after prey; 'tis time to shear
The fleeces needful at the opening of the year.
Doff your woollen cloak; surely, that is not your wear,
When Mistress Swallow darts in the bright spring-tide air.
And however you may feign to adore young Gods
At Shrines you fancy are their favourite abodes—
Ammon, Delphi, Dodona—for cares near your hearts,
Wooing, trading, fighting, you seek no foreign parts;
You search your home sky, watching it for one chance flight,
And by the objects there, discern the wrong and right.
Talk of Divination; pray, now, what is your word
For a dip into the future? Why, nought but 'Bird'!
'Bird' for any start—when a slave cracks plates or glass,
A sudden sneeze rapped out, the braying of an ass!
Let the rich spend on their Apollos; you, the poor,
Have one just as good in the sparrow at your door!

"Could you have Gods better? Use
Us as yours for Prophet, Muse.
Only tell Us what you will—
Hot, or cold, luke-warm, or chill,
Wind to nip the Dog-star, calm
That sleeps on the wheat like balm.
Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring
Nestle underneath my wing.
Whisper just the blend you need,
Served you shall be with thought-speed.

Not, like Zeus, by way of pomps,
Sit We on clouds, nursing dumps.
We love to flit where men are,
And be for each a good star;
To bring your whole household health,
Bright Youth, peaceful age, and wealth,
Sleep on down softer than silk,
Mirth, dances, feasts, and bird's milk,
Till, bliss o'erladen, the tomb,
As sink roses from full bloom.

"Muse of the Thicket! my Own,
With whom, on ash-tree, alone
Pursuing thy varied note,
I would through my tawny throat
Hymn the praise of Pan, and seek
Strains that, as to airy peak
Cybele's lions advance
Her Car, might inspire the dance,
Help me, as Phrynichus; lead
Where I too, like him, may feed
On ambrosia I'll distil
Into music such as will
Mellow what bitter must grate
In my lot assigned by Fate."

When the nightingale fell mute,
Ceasing warbling, voice and flute,
The Swans, from where, on the banks
Of Hebrus, sat their serried ranks,
Took up—was it the appeal
To all humankind to kneel,

Praying Air's Powers of their grace
T'accept homage from Man's race ?
We know only there rang out
Through luminous clouds a shout
That drove wild beasts and the herds
Cow'ring before the Lord Birds.
Blue sky overlay the tide,
And Olympus all replied
By repeated thunderings,
Whereat wonder seized its Kings,
And Graces and Muses cried for joy, or shrieked in dismay,
Though which we are not told, and it's impossible to say !

SONG OF THE CLOUDS

Nubes, vv. 275–90; and 299–313.

Clouds that have been sleeping upon the meadows,
wake, and rise;
For, though hoarse Ocean begot us, our home is in the
skies.
See! wings, sparks of living light, as Dawn touched the
dew we were,
Open out, and are bearing us into the Upper Air.
There we float, each morn a new birth, for, though 'tis
thought
The rainbow we leave behind us means we have come to
nought,
We are eternal, whether darkness visible, black night,
Or, as now, re-woven into a golden fleece of light.
Space is our playing field; so, our pastime is, mounting
high,
Over some loftiest peak, clad in forests, to descry
Watch-towers far away that guard the harvests, and
the soil
That nursed them in its bosom, from becoming foemen's
spoil;
Or to drink-in the murmurs of rushing rivers, and
roar
Of the solemn-voiced Sea hurled itself upon its shore,

But haste! the Sun, Æther's tireless eye, paves Earth
with gold rays;
Maidens, it is high time for us to doff our mantles of
grey haze.
Lo! we shed the kindly rain we brought to the fields
we love,
And, circling to and fro in blue immensities above,
Pause, as we tread our sacred mystic measures, o'er the
land
Smiling and shining with the fruit from Pallas's own
hand.
Hail! the realm of Cecrops, cherished for its race good
and true;
For its awe of rites Divine forbidden to common view.
Here, doors wide open, Mysteries are solemnized; the
sin
Is unknown of sacrilegious intruders pressing in.
Nowhere richer are oblations to the Gods in Heaven;
More sacrifices and feasts to them at all seasons given.
Land none has Temples higher-roofed statues therein
as fair;
Or whence and whither Processions more glorious repair.
Listen, Sisters, for it is the advent of laughing Spring,
Bacchus everywhere leads his dances, and the hills ring
With the beat of harmonious feet; and solitudes that
were mute
Burst into hymns to the blithe God, and the full music
of the flute!

THEOCRITUS

THEOCRITUS

The first impression in passing from Greek verse of the Golden Age or Ages to that of the composite Alexandrine and Sicilian schools is of a descent from Groves of the Muses to a Library. In exemplars of the class we are always being reminded, or seek to remind ourselves, of books. Singers of the period were sensible of the weakness. They attempted to cure or dissemble it by assuming a rustic personality. Probably all more or less fell into the habit; affected bucolic piping; though time has spared complete illustrations only by one of the number.

To prove the difficulty, without exposing the absurdity of the experiment, as in Pope's attempts, it is enough to refer to Virgil's "Eclogues," except the "Pollio." The Mantuan failures enhance our respect for Theocritus, who most nearly succeeded. "A Memory" is a nosegay of Greek country scenes. "Daphnis" is but little inferior; and "Daphnis and Menalcas" aims higher, without loss of simplicity. Still, there is an aggressive unreality to me about it all, even, and especially, the famous "Cyclops and Galatea." When it is best done, to borrow a well-known censure, the surprise is at the pains to attempt an impossibility. Theocritus ranks high for greater qualities. The "Adoniazusæ" and

"A Fisherman's Dream" are two perfect dramas in miniature. Never was a gift more exquisitely offered than in "An Ivory Distaff." But for a story-teller in verse match me the poet of "The Infant Heracles" and of "Hylas!"

He is admirable because manifestly he enjoys the romance as he evolves its course. During it his fancy broods over every touch or touch to be added. Hylas is so unforeseeingly absorbed in the fulfilment of his service, unless for a passing glance at the bright flowers around, at the sparkle of the bubbles as he dips the pitcher, with a hope perhaps of praise for despatch by his two mighty heroes. A moment, and boundless despair, with a delirium of joy to the triad of Nymphs, and full content for the poet. Satisfaction for him is as unmistakable in the wondrous myth of Heracles and the Dragons. There the roll of the few verses, unlike the leap of the fountain, is slow as the drum-beat in a funeral march. Theocritus has this power of compelling sympathy with the distilling of his fancies, whatever the text. On any subject he is thoroughly companionable. It matters not if it be a day's sightseeing by two gossiping Dorian dames in a Palace of the Ptolemies, dream-telling between a pair of starveling fishermen—portraits to the life—a music duel, with two winners—a Midsummer holiday, Bucolics—Daphnis, Cyclops, what-not—or most innocent love-weaving on an Ivory Distaff!

A MEMORY

Idyll VII (Part of).

Hail, deep-bosomed Midsummer! to recline
On freshly-cut green branches of the vine,
And the sweet mastich, while above our heads
Elms and poplars quiver and intertwine.

Heard ye not, Comrades, how the stream beside,
From its source in the cave where its Nymphs abide
Murmured of mysteries I fain had read,
But too fast, aye faster, its ripples glide?

On the boughs flame-coloured cicalas strung
Endless chains—chatter—as when Time was young:
And from afar the fluting of a thrush
Rippled from thick acanthus brakes among.

Crested larks, finches, trilled; the turtle-dove
Tired not in his bower to coo his love;
Brown bees flitted round the brook; Summer breathed
In fruitage through garden, field, orchard, grove.

Trees, pear and apple, need not there be pressed
For yield; they roll, at each passing step, a feast;
Plums—the boughs break under their purple load,
Grapes haste mature their juice to glad a guest.

Wine of such brand had cheered a future God,
When Heracles and Chiron shared abode
In garden and grotto like this; and, broached
By the Nymphs, gave spirit that fired the mood

Of the mild Cyclops into hurling rocks,
And dancing, to the mirth of Etna's stocks
And stones; not his wonted innocent draughts
On the high pastures from his fleecy flocks.

As myself couched by the stream in the shade,
Lulled by music birds and cicalas made,
They brought me there a cup crowned to the brim
From the jar that in the fire's warmth was laid.

I drank, and pledged my faith I would return
When in July the sickle should have shorn
The standing wheat and barley, and have spread
For the brisk threshers the abounding corn;

Yes; and would, as, joyous, I shook, the while,
On the winnowing fan, the dwindling pile,
Draw from Demeter, as adust she stood,
Clasping sheaves, poppies, an approving smile.

Ah! blest garden-land, where the Muses pour
Nectar for a Bard, and bees each bright hour
Distil honey for him; and his gay toil
Is but to toss grain on a threshing-floor!

A FISHERMAN'S DREAM

Idyll XXI.

Want is a keen taskmaster; hard the load,
And incessantly it applies the goad.
Work is not ready to hand; men must go
And plague their wits to find what they can do.
Then, toil they with their muscles as they may,
Care ends not with the labours of the day.
It mocks them with wakefulness long ere light,
Having made them sport for visions of the night.
Two fishermen I knew: they shared between
Them a wattled hut, where I have often been.
On the pebbles, for they were old and poor,
They had strewed dry sea-weed, a make-shift floor.
As bed and pillows—others they had none—
Bundles of leaves were piled, to lean upon.
Anywhere rough implements of their trade,
Baskets, rods, hooks, bait, lines, mats, cords, were laid.
These, with "slops" for cushions, a pair of oars,
And a crazy propped boat made their whole stores.
Scant chattels. No cooking utensils. Bare
Subsistence; hand to mouth; nothing to spare.
No neighbours had they but the sea, that pressed
Them close, and penury, hugged to their breast.
Such their state, and fixed, when, the moon, one night,

Having not half run her course ere sun light,
The pair woke; want and toil, loud watchmen, stirred
Their eyelids earlier than the first bird.
Yet innocent they as flow'rs a bee sips,
And ceased from sleep, a song upon their lips.

ASPHALION.

"They were liars, Friend, that were wont to say
Zeus takes from summer nights to add to day.
This night, and not yet near dawn, I have seen
Ten thousand dreams! what, Heavens! can it mean?
Is it I that hasten, too fast to count,
Passing hours, or is the sun slow to mount,
And bids the night 'mark time,' until he find
Fuel to start his car, and wake mankind?"

COMRADE.

"Summer, Asphalion, runs its full course.
If there be default, our old foe's the source.
Accuse not night of stealing hours from light.
Poverty, its cares, are the thieves, not night."

ASPHALION.

"You; can you read dreams—have learnt to divine?
If so, pray, listen, and interpret mine.
It sounds good; and we partners on the deep,
Must share, if good there be, my luck in sleep.
So, as 'tis a joint concern, and, 'tis said,
The prime dream-reader is the wisest head—
Which is yours—please, advise me for the best.
When you hear my story, you can suggest.

Talk at least is better than to wait morn
On leaves with to every one a thorn.
Dreary vigils when one cannot afford
Candles against the Dark, as Town Hall lord,
Whose minutes, night as morn, are worth in pay
Ever so much beyond ours, work or play."

COMRADE.

"At all events, time's cheap; I do not grudge
Use of my ears. Tell the dream. I'll judge."

ASPHALION.

"Tow'rds evening I fell fast asleep. 'Twas not
Drowsiness from overeating. You wot,
We dined early, and did not overload
Our stomachs—for good reason—with much food.
I found myself on a rock. As I shook
My line, with the bait wriggling on the hook,
A well-nourished alderman of the deep
Took the worm; for, as dogs crusts, so, in sleep
Fishermen can dream a bite. I dreamt mine,
And felt my hurt spoil straining rod and line.
Knowing the hooks weak, I stretched both hands out,
Wrestling, to grasp the monster round about.
Then, feigning he harboured revenge, I cried:
'You would fight?' and my rod struck at his side.
Here the struggle ended. I hauled ashore
A Golden Fish, all covered thickly o'er
With scales of gold! Ah! joy! though, to begin,
A shadow haunted me, of mortal sin:
'What, if pet of Poseidon's, my own lord?
Or special gem in Amphitrité's hoard?'

Howbeit, gently loosened I the hold
Of the greedy hooks on my precious gold;
Then, tugged by ropes the creature up the shore;
And, calling all the Gods to witness, swore
That never would I tempt the sea again,
But turn Gold-king, and on dry land remain!
On that I woke.
To starve; and keep my vow?
Forswear; be damned?
Say, which. I bow."

COMRADE.

"'You' neither caught the fish, nor swore the oath.
No need to be alarmed; illusions both;—
Like most dreams—though we may dream open eyes.
Your dream-rock a likely place? Hope no prize;
But search for catch to eat.
To starve, your wish?
Sleep, dream, in work-hours; and hook golden fish!"

AN IVORY DISTAFF

Idyll XXVIII.

JUST a distaff! Athena's boon to women. And I would
Mine to Theugenis in Miletus might prove as good!
I have a Bard's second sight; you shall see you need not fear,
Distaff, to fare less gently in your treatment there than here.
Lo! your new mistress, before a green, tender reed-wreathed Shrine,
In stately Miletus, praying the Queen of Love Divine
To calm the seas for one bound from Syracuse to embrace
Nicias, scion and heir of each harmonious Grace.
Next, yourself—envy I not, clasped by two white arms, and kissed
By rosiest lips?—was ever distaff as you so blest?—
Yes, and joy again, as, amid her troop of laughing girls,
Pressed by your Lady's dainty ankle, your wheel whirring, twirls,
Turning the soft fleeces from the ewes twice shorn, year by year,

Into warm cloth for men, delicate gauze for women's
wear.
I rejoice that you whom choice craftsmen of Sicily
wrought,
Will serve folk, not pithless and idle, but of nerve and
thought;
That, as your lot was to exchange the country of your
birth,
It is to a City as pleasant as there is on Earth.
I shall muse on you, when I drift, the sport of any
wind,
As housing with a good and wise healer of human-kind;
Nor then only, but when the sun sets, and night closes
in,
And you, with sweet Theugenis, your course of eve
begin,
Perhaps, it will chance that She may bethink her of a
song,
Even of its Minstrel, as the melody rolls along.
Although wild waters roar between us, I shall see and
hear,
As her eyes fall on my poor Gift, wet, may be, with one
tear.
Gifts, and Gifts! some worthless; some, that a life
cannot repay!
And the measure? In Heav'n or Hell alone the scales
to weigh!

DAPHNIS AND MENALCAS

Idyll IX.

PEASANT.

"DRIVE, Boys, the cattle to their pasture; see they graze
The boscage together, not their several ways.
Now, do not you feel in your throats the prick of Spring,
That the air is music? Breathe on your pipes, and sing.
Daphnis, you lead off on some rustic theme, and try
To play as you feel; and Menalcas shall reply."

DAPHNIS.

"Hark! a calf lows, and a heifer responds; and there
The beauty is for me that nought is strange, or rare.
To us plain countrymen Nature's marvel is She
Endows with charm the fitness of all things that be;
And our pipings, if rude, are innocent and sweet,
For they are echoes, and but reflect and repeat.
Nature how kind both in toil and in rest! I lead
My herd to pasture, whether in glade or on mead;
Then, seek, work done, the shaded margin of a stream

Leaping headlong from Etna's snowy slopes, and dream
On a leafy couch I spread with white heifer hide,
A Sou'-wester's spoil that dashed strays down a cliff's side.
Is the couch less soft for my loss in the beasts? less fair
Is June that next follows the Dog-Star's blasting glare?
Does a lover, while clasped within two milk-white arms,
Let clouds of parental wrath darken present charms?"

MENALCAS.

"Nor do I complain. No Mother can mine excel.
I lie on her lap; nor could elsewhere better dwell.
Etna is She; and though She may both scowl and storm,
To me She is aye gracious; lovely too in form.
She gave me a fine cavern in a hollow rock,
With sheep and goats, ever so many; such a flock
As none will ever see but in a dream; my bed
Is furnished from their fleeces; with their skins I spread
A carpet to warm the stone flooring for my feet.
In fancy I can smell, cooking for me to eat,
A stew of dainty entrails—nothing else so good!—
For my Mother finds me, not house alone, but food.
Fuel also; oak-boughs in Summer; and, when blow
Icy winds, and the tracks are buried deep in snow,
Weathered beechen fagots heaped plentifully on
My hearth—all, loving Etna's bounty to her Son!
Winter I mind as little as the toothless feel
Of taste for nuts beside a dinner of fine meal!"

PEASANT.

"Excellent both! I should have found it hard to say
Whether of the pair has done better with his lay.
I have a crook, a young tree from our land, and grown
So workmanlike craftsmen might claim it for their own.
Accept it, Daphnis.
For this shell, spiral, and great
That I caught on the Icarian beach with bait—
A thing of beauty, and the fish within so fine
As to make enough for the five of us to dine—
Menalcas, it is your prize. But beware the din,
If you set yours to its mouth, trumpeting therein!"

THEOCRITUS.

"Pastoral Muses! Will Ye not again draw near,
As when I voiced you to these herdsmen? let them hear
My accents, your song! mock me not with my poor verse,
When I hope it is your melody I rehearse!
Ye bound me Minister and Priest—bade me rely
On your presence. As a cicala will reply,
Echoing cicala, ant to ant, hawk to hawk,
So promised Ye that when my lips shall move, Ye talk.
Ye are my heart, my very life! Bliss that Ye come
Hither, not day-by-day lodgers, but to your home!
Yet, both strange and sweet, as sleep to care and disease,
Springtide to March, in dry places honey to bees!

Hail! warrant for pure joy, that no foul spell, nought
base
Shall trespass whereso'er your feet have left a trace.
Hail! Ye that fragrance breathe from lowliest flower,
And disdain in Man nothing but what will lower!"

THE INFANT HERACLES

Idyll XXIV.

Alcmena, Amphitryon's Wife, had washed and fed,
And put Babes Heracles and Iphicles to bed.
Heracles, ten months old, was elder by one night;
And the bed a shield, Amphitryon's spoil in fight.
The Mother, stroking the two darling heads, thus spake:
"Sleep, my children, a sweet sleep, and refreshed awake;
Brethren, Mother's life, blest be your bed! and morn's rise—
May it unseal two happy pairs of baby eyes!"
Murmuring her Good-Night, she rocked the mighty shield;
And sleep, as she prayed and rocked, settled on each child.
But when at midnight, turning, the Great Bear inclines
To set, and its shoulder against Orion shines,
Two huge Serpents stole thither, shunning to be seen,
Dread monsters, coil on coil, gleaming steel-blue sheen.
They forced, like the gradual roll of Ocean's tide,
The hollow door-posts of the chamber to gape wide,—

Bribed tools they of schemes and spite of a vengeful Wife
To crush a rival's spawn, and grind it out of life!
At full length the pair grovelled in the dust along;
Baleful fire flamed from their eyes, venom spat each tongue.
Nor, though the fell mouths watered as savouring prey,
Zeus intervened—His blood must find itself a way!
Still, His heart beat there; and each such heart-beat is light;
So in the room was something, neither day, nor night,
That aroused the two Babes. Iphicles, with a wild
Scream at sight of the fangs gloating over the shield,
Wrenched the coverlet off, racking his infant brain
How to tumble himself down, and cheat death, in vain.
His twin spurned flight; and just below where gullets gasped,
Slavering poison—by Gods as men dreaded—grasped,
Each hand, a windpipe, careless that the coils twined round
His body, so long as in his grip they as fast unwound.
No cry he raised, none more of triumph than dismay.
Tearless, fearless, two stark dragons on him, he lay!
Meanwhile Alcmena had awakened Amphitryon:
"Haste! I tremble; wait not to put your sandals on.
Hark! 'tis Iphicles; there is terror in his cries;
As you love me, up, Dearest! brush sleep from your eyes;
Still it is early night; the dawn is long away;
Yet, look, the walls are visible, though hours off day."
He leaped forth at the call, stretching up—the first thought—

His hand to pull the sword down-hanging, richly
wrought,
In its sheath of black lotus-wood, above the bed;
When, suddenly, the radiance ceased, and, instead,
Night resumed, with darkness and silence, as before,
Except, from the slaves' quarters, echoed their deep
snore.
"Lights!" shouted Amphitryon: "much-enduring
dolts;
Strike sparks from the embers; drive fast home the
doors' bolts!"
The whole household stirred; and, throughout, the
mansion blazed
With lamplight.
But oh! the hurricane that was raised,
The frenzy! when, lo! the Babe in each clenched soft
fist
Held—choked the grinning jaws—a stone-dead noisome
beast!
His own sole care being, with bubbling bursts of joy,
Gurgles of merriment, as one's with a new toy,
To toil on—the rest at gaze shuddering—and drag
The coils, for his sire to play with fangs and poison
bag.
Tired at last he dropped asleep, and was put to rest.
Tucked up warm he slumbered—a young bird in its
nest
Gladly Amphitryon sought for himself the same
Relief, and dreamt happy dreams until morning came.
Iphicles, shuddering, passionately distressed,
Alcmena sought to comfort, fondling on her breast.
Long she lay awake; and, when other inmates slept,
Pondering night's marvels, an anxious vigil kept;

Then, at cockcrow, she told Tiresias the tale,
Imploring of him the truth, whether good or bale :
" For none human ward off, when spun the Fates' Decree !
Much wisdom though Thou hast, this, Prophet, learn of Me ! "
" Courage, Grandchild of Perseus," the blind Seer replied :
" Women's theme, as, spinning, they sing at eventide,
Will be ' Alcmena ' ; name for Argos to adore !
Yea, by the light that visits my dead orbs no more,
Glory in this Babe, that, such as he is, thy son,
He will grow a man as, infant, he has begun.
Heir he to a mortal's strength of muscles, and heart
Within them, a God's, that shall play an earthly part.
Be content with his sojourn here that it will prove
How all Earth's scourges bow to Heaven's race above ;
For though he must twelve ruthless ordeals undergo,
And be purged by fire first of mortal flesh Below,
Olympus is his birthright ; he shall share its feasts,
Even ally with Gods that hired sly, felon beasts
To rend his baby limbs.
But while he labours here
The name ' Heracles ' will be one of love and fear,
This shield he lies in, for weak and the oppressed
A cradle where they too may sleep, and take their rest ;
The dream-smile upon his lips strengthen to a charm
To nerve righteous wrath, seal meekness against harm ;
And the shade of the lion skin that he shall wear,
Falling on a kid, warn wolves, wild or human, to forbear."

ADONIAZUSÆ

Idyll XV.

PRAXINOË.

"SIT down, dear Gorgo; you know you are late;
I thought you would not come, but meant to wait."

GORGO.

"Well, had you seen, you would wonder I'm here
At all. Ah! the crowd; and everywhere
Teams four abreast, blocking up the whole street
And mailed boots trampling upon sandalled feet!
'Twas brave to come; for, Darling, I must say,
You really do live out of the way."

PRAXINOË.

"My husband's whim that we who share one heart
Should live as far as possible apart.
Jealous-mad on purpose he chose this den
For dogs to bark in, not a home for men.
Always so. If I make a friend, his joy
Is to contrive a breach—just to annoy."

GORGO.

"'Little pitchers have long ears'; take care
In your talking; saw you not the child stare?"

PRAXINOË.

"You could not, Ducky, think I meant Papa
By a bad man who did what vexed Mamma?"

GORGO.

"Good Papa!
"Saints! a sharp Babe! Pick and choose
Your confidences—mind your *p*'s and *q*'s!"

PRAXINOË.

"Lately—not to be too specific—He
Went to buy powder-and-paint stuff for me.
Guess what it was He brought back at noon?
A parcel of salt, the long lazy loon!"

GORGO.

"My Man, Diocleidas, is quite as bad
As your Deinon; the follies he commits! March-mad!
Yesterday he bought five fleeces—dog's hair!
You cannot imagine the filth they were;
Not worth the cost of cleaning; and the price!
Cash burns holes in his pockets in a trice!

"But, dress! robe, and clasped petticoat! You know
The Queen has undertaken this year's show.
Trust Arsinoë for costliness; none
Do things as well; all wealth can, will be done!"

PRAXINOË.

"I shall rejoice to see, and to report
To the poor souls that cannot go to Court."

GORGO.

"Quick; we hard-worked wives have no time to waste
Holidays, like idlers who only feast."

PRAXINOË.

"Five minutes to wash.
'Fool! towels instead
Of water! Plague upon all slaves home-bred!
Content—cats!—to lie soft!
At last! Pour; stop!
Clumsy creature! look here; my shift's a sop!'
Clean before Heaven! 'This key fits the lock
Of the big chest; go, and fetch the frock.'"

GORGO.

"Perfect, the full style! none could have become
You better! and cost—made up—from the loom?"

PRAXINOË.

"Ruinous! clear eight pounds! but I would die,
Rather than live to walk about a guy!
'Parasol, Girl—the cloak—see it hangs well.'
'No, Child! Bugbear catch you to slap and sell!
Mamma would rather hear her Pretty squall
Than have horse bite foot, and make Baby crawl!'
'Play, Lyddy, with Master Zopyrion;
Call the dog in; bar till the feast be done!'"

Outside.

"Gods! the crowd! and we expect without harm
To squeeze a passage through this monstrous swarm!

My Man is fond of talking on the worth
Of the King since his Father left this Earth—
The change he has brought to pass from the time
When the People were nought but human slime;
A gang of tricksters, vain of fraud, a race
Of cowards, assassins, all rogues, all base.
And, pray, look at the Royal chargers! how
Are the riders better in manners now!
'Good Sir! you are treading on me; take care!
The bay rears, and is bolt up, paws in the air!'
'Run, Eunoë, Impudence! or his feet
Will spill all brains you have about the street!
Forefeet down—how he kicks—as he whirls round,
Resolved to stretch somebody on the ground!'
Comfort to have the Infant safe and sure
From the risks his poor Mother must endure!"

GORGO.

"Thank Goodness! the horsemen have gone their way;
And we can go ours without more delay."

PRAXINOË.

"I am all right now; but I never stood
Either horse, or cold snake, from babyhood.
So, off! the cavalry dispersed the crowd;
Again it is gathering in a flood."

GORGO.

"Of the Palace, Dame?"

OLD LADY.

"Daughters, Yes; and ye?
Why asked ye?"

GORGO.

"Because we too fain would be,
And seek means."

OLD LADY.

"Take as the Greeks Troy."

GORGO.

"And they?"

OLD LADY.

"Oh, simply went-in; and that was their way."

GORGO.

"Gone, with an oracle."

PRAXINOË.

"Bade go inside.
'Tis like Zeus; wooed not, but just took His Bride."

GORGO.

"Yes; but how inside? see the door; the throng!"

PRAXINOË.

"A solid block! Yet can't go back.
Along!
Your hand, Gorgo; and, Eunoë, hold tight

To mine; together, we will make a fight.
Murder! my summer veil slit down—my best!'
'Kind Sir, if you would be for ever blest
By Zeus, lift your foot off my dress!'"

STRANGER.

"Truth! I
Cannot; but, Madam, all the same, I'll try."

PRAXINOË.

"This rampant mob human? I see no sign
Of Man about it—a herd of wild swine!"

STRANGER.

"A rude tussle! but, spite of waves and blast,
We survive, and are in our port at last!"

PRAXINOË.

"Yes, thanks to you, Sir, and to you alone!
May Heav'n reward the pity you have shown!
'Ah! where is that unlucky Eunoë?
Being hustled—Break through! well done! Here's she!'
Good! we're safe! "what matters the storm outside?"
As Bridegroom quoth to soaked friends when locked in with Bride!"

GORGO.

"Praxinoë, the embroideries! haste!
Who but Gods durst wear them? the fineness, taste!"

PRAXINOË.

"Our Lady Athena! whose brain but thine
Could have conceived workmanship all Divine?
The forms that stand about, and those that move—
Might they not think and talk, and war and love?
At what skill may not the Thing Man arrive!
View Him on the silver couch! dead? alive?—
Delicate down just shading lips and cheek—
One would not start if He began to speak!
'Tis Adonis, imaged as till they come
To carry him to Aphrodité's home."

SECOND STRANGER.

"For mercy's sake, cease your chatter, clatter!
Tiresome turtle-doves! still flat, still flatter!"

GORGO.

"And who are you? whence, please, your right to rate
Syracusan ladies—tell them they prate?
From Corinth, like Bellerophon, we trace
Our descent; can you claim a nobler race?
Dorians, from Peloponnesus sprung—
Why should we not employ the Doric tongue?
If now we fall mute, 'tis not for your airs,
But She who sang the 'Sperchis' dirge prepares
To hymn 'Adonis'; and 'tis not worth while
At one note's loss to fling back mud of Nile!"

(*At end of Hymn.*)

"Clever Thing! good luck hers to have been born
With wits! and for song—an amazing turn!

But I'm late! and a fasting husband! what,
When Diocleidas happens to be that!
Hungry, He'd snap off anybody's head.
Beware of wild beasts when they're not full fed!"

"However, I've viewed Adonis; the while
Till he return I'll live upon his smile!"

HYLAS

Idyll XIII.

Heracles was probation-God; the love
He cherished for Hylas was from Above.
His heart of bronze, sensible of no qualm
At a lion's onset, would lose its calm
With a thought he was not by to bar offence
To the lad, life, and limb and innocence.
With a father's large hopes and fears he yearned
To instruct in all good that he had learned;
Glad to foresee the graceful boy would grow
Brave and famous as he, without the woe;
A yoke-fellow trained after his own mind,
True and loyal, a pattern to mankind.
Never were they apart, from when Dawn's white
Steeds started for Heaven, to fall of night,
What time perchers watch their nest for a shake
Of mother's wing to signal laden beak.
So, when Jason called the flower of Greece
To join his Crusade for the Golden Fleece,
Heracles was among the first aboard,
And Hylas, uncounted, came with his lord.

Well rowed the oarsmen, well the helmsman steered;
The Dark Rocks themselves had been safely cleared.
Erst sunk and jostling, from this date they stand

Isles, Argo's monument, on either hand.
And, swooping, like an eagle, on its breast
The sea tossed the ship through; to wait at rest
Within the mouth of Phasis, wintering,
Secure from sharp frosts, and rough winds, till Spring
Should call lambs abroad, and the Pleiads rise
To remind the crew of its enterprise.
Then, all re-embarked, and, with three days' aid
From south-west winds, the Hellespont had made.
In the Propontis—the Kianian shore—
Rich ploughland that—they found where they could moor,
Disembarked, the Thirty's wont was in pairs,
Sorted at choice, to divide household cares.
Heracles, Telamon, were messmates; so,
One cut rushes and galingal, that grow
Largely on the salt meadows there, and spread
To ease the rigour of a sailor's bed.
His comrade dressed a meal, by mother wit,
With ready appetites to season it.
Golden-haired Hylas was assigned the least
Toilsome task, to fetch water for the feast.
He shouldered a bronze pitcher, and soon found
A fountain bubbling up in oozy ground.
About, green maidenhair, swallow-wort blue
Bloomed, with more wildings of many a hue.
An instant before, in the jets and spray
The Naiads of the Spring had been at play.
Beings not of Earth, or Heaven—rustics' dread—
That never slumber, nor alive, nor dead—
They awaited sunset to dance and sing:
Eunеicha, Malis, Nucheia, with face of Spring.
At the boy's footfall, they dived, saw not him;

And hasting—friends athirst—to fill to brim,
He stooped, and, half across, with body leant
To dip;
when a rush of hands, as he bent!
A rapture of delight had whirled the Three wild
At sight of the wondrous, beautiful child.
Tender and soft, never could they have thought
Of loveliness like this; they were distraught!
As for him, torn from his dear lord, and all
Worth his care, falling as a stone might fall,
He woke—from life, or death?—weeping, and laid
Upon the white knees of one smiling maid,
While two dried his tears by lip, hair, and hand,
With caresses he could not understand.
They pitied, could not part with him!
And here
Closed for strangers, Hylas and his career.
A star will shine in the Heav'ns a brief space;
Then plunges in the sea, leaving no trace.
Sailors grieve not for the lost star, but hail
The promise in its fall of a fair gale.
Hylas was mourned for a moment—no more.
Only one pulse beat quicker than before!
Ah! heartbreak for Heracles!
"Gone the lad?"
He snatched bow, arrows, wonted club, and had
Tracked him to the fountain; there, roared thrice;
Been answered, as from far, by a thin voice.
On the Hero the Boy's cry of despair
Worked as on bearded lion in its lair
The distant cry of a strayed fawn. His heart
Throbbed too with hunger—a father's—
The smart

A rankling longing, as to clasp a ghost,
Drove him through pathless wastes after the Lost!
Frenzied pilgrimage o'er a world of space—
Prize ever receding in the blind race—
Exchanging fleshly pangs in deserts curst
By a pitiless sun with heat and thirst
That he felt not, for agonies of soul
Lashing him to'ards an impossible goal;
Till, unpaid for heart and faith broke, he found
"Self" in Colchis, whither was Argo bound.
Among his Labours none like this; the rest
He wrestled with, and threw; here, in his breast,
A void demanded to be filled in vain.
Nor least for such as Heracles, the pain
To plead as an excuse, a private grief,
For breach of duty that was first and chief;
To desert the post he had filled aboard
The Argo; be false to his plighted word;
Forfeit the glory of dowering Greece
With a timeless trophy, the Golden Fleece.
His comrades felt for him, and had approved
Pious search for the bright boy whom all loved,
But could not outstay dawn. Sails wooed the air;
How suspect Heracles would not be there?
Of Greek champions to be defaulter He!
So, with sad heart, Jason put out to sea.
And Hylas? sunk in a deep pool.
And dead?
How not?—with water—fathoms—overhead.
If Nymphs did the deed, and for love—what then!
To die for love, is no rare doom for men.
Nay; Beings so beautiful could not have
Drawn Boy so beautiful down to his grave.

We read, his comforters pursued their quest
Till they assured him life among the Blest.
Zeus could not refuse when three Naiads prayed
To have their charming prey immortal made.
Happy! if ward of Heracles ne'er thought
Eternity of ease was dearly bought
By loss of a mortal career, when days
Close in a hero's even-song of praise,
And blind Homer harps of Telamon's son,
Doer of deeds that Hylas might have done!

BION AND MOSCHUS

BION AND MOSCHUS

By a strange coincidence Time has spared us one fine poem of each, and, similarly, for each, a delightful accompaniment of gaiety. Slight as are Bion's "Innocent Boyhood" and "Led Astray," they are for ease and point without a flaw. Often as they are read, they seem ever fresh. But more substantial matter has survived than these airy trifles for belief in their author's poetic power. The "Epitaph on Adonis" gathers together the ragged clues of a tangled legend into a coherent whole. It overflows with melody. No lament for Aphrodité's love is extant equalling it in beauty, even in intelligibility, amid all that chaos of crazy liturgies.

In serious verse Moschus compares with Bion's "Adonis" in his elegy on Bion himself. In poetic literature it ranks deservedly high. My attempt at a version indicates at least that it contains noble thoughts on a dead master's genius. It is not entirely my fault if it be judged that the dirge at times labours. May I be allowed, on the other hand, to hope that the translation of a mother's appeal does not obscure overmuch the brilliancy of a marvellous inspiration of humour!

Farewell to the Pair! and alas that one headstone should suffice for the monument of two such as the

scanty remains prove these to have been! Who can credit such a double paradox as that the half-dozen brilliant pieces in existence were the whole on which fervent contemporary admiration of the couple rested!

ADONIS

Bion: Idyll I.

Adonis the Beautiful is dead! weep,
Loves! and Thou, Aphrodité, off with sleep!
Rend thy sapphire raiment, beat thy white breast;
Up, and to the heights, in black sackcloth dressed.
Quick! Thou wilt find him in the moaning wood,
Dear Life passing in the gored thigh's dark blood.
Ah! that the light fading in the glazed eyes
Will not reflect thine on him as he dies,
Or tell him that Immortal passion, flouting Death, still sips
The love he can no longer savour on his pale-cold lips!

Who, what laments him not? Every hound
Whimpers, knowing him dead; the Nymphs around
Chant dirges, sing his praises. But no smart
Equals the ache in Aphrodité's heart.
Hair loosed, unkempt, about the brakes, forlorn
She wanders barefoot, by the brambles torn.
See her, traceable by the bloodstains, rove;
Hark! she calls through the glades on her lost love!
And was this our Queen Cypris of graces Divinely rare,
Whose sole pride and conceit it is to be no longer fair?

All Nature mourns, forests of oak, and hills,
Broad rivers, and plains, dancing mountain rills.
Earth's bosom from the blood the boar's tusk shed
Paints the varied blossoms that it sends forth red;
As Cytherea cries her Darling's name,
Echo, catching the grief, returns the same.
If spirits could but have exchanged for once,
And his have reflected hers in response,
How eagerly would She have absorbed him within her soul,
Making of one last kiss from a fountain of love—the whole!

Mad; and She knows it: "Be left enough breath
To blow passion hot in the frost of death!
Doomed thou wert, and hast flitted to Styx's shore,
Whence its grim King releases souls no more.
Or its Queen. Can I vie with her in might?
If in life—in death all is hers by right.
Aught lovely. And Adonis, who was Mine—
Free Adonis? I doubt thee, Proserpine!
Fled as a shadow, faded as a vision of the night—
Fool to have fancied sheer longing could bring thee back to light!"

Dead! Yet beauty is not disdained by Death;
And Death shall yield the dead no loveless wreath.
From tears of Cypris the wind-flower grows;
Of blood of Adonis is born the rose.
Back; none dying awaits Thee in the glade.
Adonis on thy bed of leaves is laid.
Oftentimes hast Thou found him there asleep;
View him lying dead; and Thou wilt not weep.

Hadst never seen him living—never, until life had fled—
Thou wouldst have cast off Immortality to be his,
Dead!

Put on him soft apparel, wherein blest
With beauty like to his are wont to rest.
Heap crowns, flowers of all hues, though they die,
When they find he is dead, in sympathy.
Match his breath—scents inestimably rare,
That vainly burn, and expire in despair.
Train the young Loves—rather than sharpen darts
Upon the whetstone of poor, human hearts—
To loose sandals, though from dead feet, bathe, from
gold ewers, the wound,
With wings whisp'ring to marble brows, persuade sleep
deep and sound.

Yes; he is dead; and yet too sweet and fair
For the Underworld to hope to keep him there.
Weep, Loves; and, Hymenæus, as is meet,
In place of wreaths and minstrelsy to greet
Happy brides and bridegrooms, bid Hymen wring
Hands, and chant a funeral dirge, not sing
Marriage hymns, while Graces' add Muses' cry
On their Dear to return brings no reply.—
Then, suddenly, the Universe ceases from grief; life's
tide
Rises, ebbs, as if Adonis had ne'er been loved, or died.
Year by year, far into the past, a strange
Progress across Time's stage this interchange
Of common life and tragedy Divine.
Yearly a curtain lifts; and lo! a line
Of Beings, their beauty wonderful, come

From afar, as to their own rightful home.
Though what is there that might not well have been
As is acted and painted on the scene?
Do ye murmur: "Death would have quenched love
in a Goddess." Nay;
Love in an Immortal breast would, with death, have
burned for aye!

More than first thrill, ev'n conquest of disdain,
Wouldst not Thou, Queen Cypris, have prized the
pain,
A new sense, the agony in the wood
Thou roamedst, robe purpled with the dear blood—
Ecstasy of pure grief—beyond all charms
In having smiled Adonis to thy arms,
The feeling that death had sealed him thy own—
Life half ransomed—ne'er payable the loan!
So, mayst Thou count the days, our Queen, when Thou
shalt reap the cost
And price of kissing Adonis back to be loved—and
lost!

INNOCENT BOYHOOD

Bion: Idyll II.

With rods, a parcel, limed to fish the air,
Picked to match bushes as if they grew there,
A youthful fowler had sought out a spot
Whither were used his winged prey to repair.

Kind Chance! on a box-tree in a green grove,
Lo! one, big, plump, as cooks and sportsmen love!
He, mere slip of a boy, tried all his arts
The strange fowl's curiosity to move.

All in vain. "So insensible! and yet
Handsome!" He threw his rods down in a pet,
Fingers itching to feel the creature's throat,
Should he tangle it in a common net!

Finding an old man who taught him the skill,
He asked him to visit the copse. There still
Perched our fine quarry, that, after one glance
At greybeard, nought vouchsafed for good or ill.

"Oho!" sniggered the countryman. "Take care
To give that a wide berth; they who wise are
Flee as poison the wicked bird; try not
To catch it; and, grown man, ev'n more beware!

Now, it affects to despise; perhaps, may;
Sure, if caged, though seeming content to stay,
  It will have the laugh, simple soul, on you,
And force the barred door open any day.

As it is, thank your stars you are not Man,
And enjoy your liberty while you can.
  You'll know when the reprieve is up; for it
That shunned pursuit when you, poor child, began,

Will of a sudden either forge or feign
An invitation, whence proceed to gain
  Easy footing upon a silly head,
And quickly peck out aught there is of brain!"

LED ASTRAY

Bion: Idyll III.

As I slept, Aphrodité, leading young
Cupid, louting low, by her hand along,
  Prayed me: "Dear Herdsman, out of love for me,
Please, teach Baby your pretty trick of song!"

That was all; and away the Great Queen went.
Youth I, thinking She a sound training meant,
  Prepared to ground the urchin in my craft,
Supposing such was the child's honest bent.

So, asleep, I showed how quite natural
'Twas that Pan, Pallas, Hermes, Phœbus, all,
  Devised instruments to exalt our Art,
Till out of them was born the Pastoral;—

Each being just itself, His or Her own;
Whether stringed, or one way or other blown;
  Cross-flute, and nondescript, lyre, and guitar;—
Better to me dreaming than waking known.

Pity, my pupil listened not;—meanwhile
He plotted the inveigling me to smile,
  By humming loose ballads, and scandal-talk,
Graceless Boy! of his Mother in her Isle.

Nor this the worst calamity, to find
That no rudiments had lodged in his mind;
Or ev'n that mine had lost all it had stored.—
But oh! the lewd airs there, instead, enshrined!

ON BION

Moschus, his twin in Bucolic Verse mourns:

A joy has faded from off the Earth. Fruit,
Honey, flowers, have lost their sweetness; mute
Morn's gaiety; only birds sing that bring
A toll of sadness to the sorrowing.

HUE AND CRY!

Moschus: Idyll I.

"'Oyez!
Good People! Run away!
Lost at the Three-cross-roads! a stray!'
It is my Cupid!
None shall be
Without a due reward from me.
For 'seeing' the Child—Just for this
A fond Mother offers a kiss!
But, pray, Sirs, be ye careful what
Ye look for; Mine's no common brat;
Very notable: take a batch,
A score; you would not find his match.
Complexion? not your milky-white,
But as it had drunk red-hot light.
Keen eyes, gimlets to pierce inside,
And blaze so! brain can nothing hide!
Sweet chatter, with purpose unkind;
Likeness none between tongue and mind.
Honey even to an excess;
After-taste gall and bitterness.—
For my Babe, it must be confessed,
In a temper is a wild beast.

Pity too—though can it surprise,
Such sharp wits?—that he's apt at lies;
That sauce goes with his curly hair,
And sports he favours cruel are.
Soft, little hands, and dimpled each!
That can Styx and King Pluto reach.
Naked Innocent! who has read
That dark, impenetrable head?
'Boast you're safe, as he spends the day
With a neighbour over the way?'
Delphic bird he, and skewers two hearts
At one flight in several parts.
Yes; with bow so small, shaft much less,
Yet can wound in the halls of Bliss
From the gold quiver at his back.
Matricide! gives Mamma the rack.
In a freak of insolent fun,
Fires ev'n the Palace of the Sun.
Now, anyone who hears my child
Is somewhat more than common wild,
Yet would earn a Mother's regard,
And a hope of special reward,
By making little Mischief come
Back to the shelter of a home,
Had best take warning—tie him fast,
When he drops on the Boy at last.
Cunning young rascal, he will try
To win compassion by some lie—
Say he was whipt—and I can swear,
Richly deserved it if he were—
Resort to tears; squeeze out a few—
Each one a pearl of dawn-touched dew—
Or shoot—a serpent to beguile—

From his artillery a smile ;
Yea, purse a pair of rosy lips
To kiss—poison to him who sips !
But suppose—miracles—the Brave,
With captive, trussed fowlwise, to have
Passed ordeals of kiss, smile, and tear,
What if my Imp, how like the Dear !
Should, final stake, as knowing well
They had been dipped in flame of Hell,
Pledge to his captor bow and darts—
With royal patent to break hearts—
And if, as any, offered this,
Would accept, and plunge straight in Dis—
How shall I ever catch, alas ! .
Such an Infant as never was ? "

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS

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Apollonius was of Alexandria, but passed several years in Rhodes, whence he took a name. He was not of or from Sicily, and pretends not to play on Pan's pipes. Working up-hill at first, against fashionable literary prejudices in Egypt, finally even there he won his way. It was a brave thing to choose a theme which was Pindar's, and he discovered a track without jostling. The Greek masters showed the working of passions chiefly by deeds done. Apollonius so far is modern; he anatomizes his Medea to indicate how The Fleece was won. The processes of examining and weighing emotions in a girl's love-stricken heart, though almost cruel, are vivid and artistic.

In agreement with the Alexandrian character in Greek literature, the main aim was to interest in the mechanism of an individual mind or minds. In earlier Greek that was not the writer's motive, though it was an effect. The direct intention was to glorify a hero, or a country. If emphasis was laid on especial tenets or propensities, it was to exalt a God or Goddess. An Alexandrine chose a tradition or adventure, as a novelist now, because he saw his way to work it into a plot. Apollonius took the Argonauts less on their own account

than for Medea's sake. Aware as he certainly was of the heroic individualities of the men, he had in Colchis no use for them, and for all essential purposes dispenses with all but their chief. Medea is his heroine. His Poem's distinctive merit is the subtlety with which her character develops itself according to the necessities of the story. That is still just so far as his scope requires. It is a most elaborate study of a love-sick girl distracted between affections, duties as she held, originally, to playmates of her blood, next, to her father, then, after an agonizing struggle, to her love. All through, besides, we have to remember she was, to begin, an unconscious tool in Queen Hera's and Athena's design for the success of the ship. It is a new reading of the future terrible, appalling Enchantress's passions.

The scenic dressing is admirable. Daily life, though without Sicilian shepherds and herdsmen, makes a good background. Nowhere, again, has the Love-God been more charmingly depicted with all his boyish freakishness. Greatness is not after the manner of Apollonius; but there is no better playing at the Epic in miniature. Among votaries of romantic poetry, "The Argonauts" has remained in favour. So fine a student of letters as Charles James Fox loved it.

THE ARGONAUTS

Argonautica, III.

Rhodian Apollonius has told
That the Argonauts won the Fleece of Gold.
Others had sung already how they fared
In the brave enterprise that Jason dared.
Thus, Pindar has done it in a great Hymn
Beside which later lights may well burn dim
From a Silver Age; and yet he of Rhodes
Has treated subtly, passion's gusts and goads.
Jason had not known at first that the King
So loved the Fleece as to lust for the Thing;
That he meant by spells the Sun his Sire taught,
With fresh a youthful daughter's studies wrought,
To pervert a Trust, as he feigned to hold
His tenure, into lordship of the gold.
The wrath he showed warned the crew to beware
Both of rude force and of treacherous snare.
Human hearts hide not from Heavenly eyes.
Gods saw the King would use craft to surprise
Guileless Heroes; only the wiles of love
Could resist enchantments that he might move.
Hera and Athena gained the consent
Of Aphrodité, Cupid's bow was lent,
Almost with gratitude. A lively scene
Paints that in the orchard of Zeus, the Queen

Of Cyprus found her Boy playing gold dice,
And cheating Ganymede; how in a trice
The Babe's last two were added to the rest
Which Love held in a clenched fist to his breast.
Sulking at a burst of loud cackle, stole
Off the ground in dudgeon the spoilt pet fool,
When Aphrodité entered. As She came,
A glance, and She caught the trick of Love's game;
Though the admiring tone in which She cried:
"Sham, Knave!" savoured less of her wrath than pride.
Piously he vowed he'd without delay
Inflame a maid; for him a holiday,
With, or without the promise of a ball—
"Plaything of boy Zeus; pictures over all;
For flight, would mount up, up, ever so far,
I'd be thought to have got hold of a star!"
Better, he pleads, give now; "touch of the prize
Would surely have made gimlets of his eyes.
But sooner off, sooner back"; so, arrayed
With quiver and bow, in hot haste he made,
Having free exit and entrance by birth,
Instant plunge through Heaven's gates upon Earth.
No grander Palace than Aia's; a God,
Hephæstus, built it, fair and strong abode
For the son of Helios, to requite
The cripple's rescue from a Giant's might.
A garden bloomed outside, with promise large
Of grapes and flowers; and along its marge
Babbled from founts that severally rolled,
Warm as the Pleiads set, as they rose, cold,
Jets, milk, wine, water, sweet oil, wondrous art,
Though not more than o'erflowed every part.
Round an inner Court lofty buildings stood,

Lodgings for a proud King, and Royal blood,
With slaves many. Æetes dwelt in one,
And his Queen; in another, next, his son,
Apsyrtus. Others housed Chalciope,
With her sons by Phrixus, returned from sea,
And Medea—of such awe for her Shrine
That few marked charms, though human, half Divine!
Scarce herself conscious. From when rose the sun
She served Hekate till day's course was run.
Only now Hera stayed her for the Plot's sake,
That Cupid's arrow might its due course take.
Already Jason, holding in his hand,
Pledge of his amity, a Herald's wand,
Attended, with five more, prepared to meet,
And settle points at issue without heat.
To avoid street encounters, Hera cast
A thick mist o'er the route as the Greeks passed;
But it cleared.
As Cupid brushed through the crowd,
Breasts panted, eyes gleamed, women sighed aloud.
Twisting-in, close by Jason, on the string,
Tight-strained, he fitted a shaft. On the wing
It whirred; and with a jeer and laugh, pleased well—
Though the rights of his work he could not tell—
At the girl's dumb surprise, the Imp fell back
From Hall and throng, leaving her on the rack.
He had performed his task, earned his reward;
So he handled the plaything, nought he cared!
Jason "begged the Fleece as Greek." The King must
In conscience keep; "bound by a sacred Trust."
"Yoke the Bulls; face the Dragon; take the Fleece;
And restore it triumphantly to Greece!"
Thwart his magic? Perhaps. But Medea's? How
suppose

His Medea's a weapon of his foes?
Yes; the arrow—a flame—clove the Maid's heart—
The melting, vibrating, bitter, sweet smart!
A seamstress lets one spark touch; due delay—
Fire will warm her to work by break of day—
And the heaped brushwood is a blaze! So, now,
A pure, virgin soul changed to red-hot tow.
Nor knew she to what lengths the fire might spread.
She loved; not cause enough therein for dread?
Enough of pain, glancing beside her veil,
To count the beatings of her heart, to feel
Herself in bonds, a drawn, flickering shade,
Obliged to tread one track, each footstep made?
Knowing her Sire's fury at the demand
For return of the Fleece to its own land,
She sought the Women's quarters with the rest,
The longing swelled, with absence, in her breast.
Agony—how be sure fancy saw true?
That memory indeed gave him to view,
Recalled how he rose, and resumed his seat,
Attuned the words he uttered, honey-sweet?
Pride to love such! But the pits in his path;
Deadliest dug by the King's subtle wrath!
Thinking, she grieved as for one on his bier;
And down a cheek rolled an eloquent tear.
Cruel the contest that she had to wage,
Girlish shame at an all unsought love's rage.
Worn out at last she slept, and a kind dream
Bade believe Jason had not, as would seem,
Voyaged to regain the Fleece, but was come
To woo her to reign, Queen, with him at home.

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